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The river horse ... p.16

59th year of publication

The European Union suffers another blow

Harry der Nederlanden

After the rejection of the new European constitution by France and The Netherlands, there was much hand-wringing followed by an attempt to recover the former optimism about the future of the new Europe. The failed referendums were followed by a two-day summit in mid-June to hammer out the EU budget for 2007-2013. Like the referendums, it was preceded by dark rhetoric about the importance of reaching an agreement and the consequences of failure.

Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac

The 25 members, however, dispersed from the budget summit without reaching an agreement. In fact, they parted in a spirit of acrimony, finger pointing and quite a bit of mud-slinging. Even the EU leaders themselves admitted that the Union was in the worst crisis yet of its history. Elaine Sciolino, in the *New York Times*, said the two setbacks to the EU "stripped away all pretense of an organization with a common vision and reflected the fears of many leaders in the face of rising popular opposition to the project called Europe." Another analyst declared, "The European bubble has burst."

After the two failed referendums, the leaders of the EU continued to cling to the idea that eventually the new constitution would still be accepted. They blamed the no votes not on their own failure but on the voters' failure: the voters didn't understand and they were voting on the wrong issues.

Jean-Claude Juncker, EU president, said, "I want to believe obstinately that neither the French nor the Dutch have rejected the constitutional treaty. A lot of the questions in the French and Dutch debates find answers in the constitution."

He expressed confidence that, given time, the EU bureaucrats would be able "to persuade the people that the treaty is the right set of rules for the future."

This reluctance of the EU leaders to accept the no votes was indicative of the gap between them and the people they are supposed to represent. This large gap was precisely what prompted many people in France and The Netherlands to vote against further expansion and centralization.

The breakdown of the budget meeting was largely reported in terms of a showdown between Blair and Chirac, Britain and France, although in some quarters most of the blame was put on the shoulders of Blair.

Part of the deal to get Britain to join the EU involved an annual rebate that has been gradually increasing over the last two decades. This year it amounted to $4.6 billion euros (over $6 billion Can.) and was deeply resented by other members. Blair was prepared to yield on the rebate, but only if France agreed to renegotiation of the huge subsidies that go to its farmers. About 45 percent of the EU budget goes toward farm subsidies, with France by far the biggest beneficiary.

Except for the farm subsidies, the monies are largely intended to help the poorer member countries integrate their economies with the rest of Europe.

The EU has helped to greatly boost the economies of countries like Spain and Greece, and was expected to help vitalize the economies of the newest members like Poland. The ten newest members have the most to lose if the budget is not approved.

In a last ditch effort to get an agreement, these countries offered to give up a sizeable chunk of the monies meant for themselves – if only Britain and France came to some compromise.

Once again the clash was interpreted as the result of competing visions of Europe. Blair said that Chirac was clinging to an outdated vision of the EU. He argued that in order to compete with China and India, the EU needs to become more streamlined, removing trade and employment barriers to make it more responsive to the demands of globalization. The economies of several European countries have been very sluggish recently and unemployment has been on the rise.

Chirac, on the other hand, dismisses Blair's concerns as part of "the Anglo-Saxon model" and he champions instead the continuation of the continental social model that provides for a protective security shield. However, as their populations age and their economies falter, countries like France and Italy are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain the present level of social benefits.

Chirac charged Blair and the British with selfishly draining funds away from the poorer countries. The British are quick to point out, however, that they pay three times as much per capita to the EU as the French, and the Dutch chime in that they pay even more.

"There are two ideas of Europe," said Juncker, "with some countries wanting to have just a European market with a big free-trade zone and others who want an integrated Europe. There are those who believe a free-trade area is sufficient, but they do not realize it is more complicated. A politically integrated Europe would allow Europe to rise to the challenge facing it."

There's no question where Juncker stands in the debate, and, according to *The Economist*, he tried hard to isolate Britain at the summit. However, several other countries, like The Netherlands, also question the future of an ever expanding, ever more integrated Europe.

One of the provisions of the new constitution was a foreign affairs office so that Europe could act in concert on the global stage. Chirac wants Europe to act as a counter-weight to American global dominance. However, in the past Europe has seldom been able to act in concert, except in NATO and then with American leadership.

Simon Berlaymont suggests in an essay on openDemocracy.com, that much of the present tension comes from the fact that the leadership of the EU has presented the Constitution in overly grand terms. He argues that it is more like a treaty among different nations than a constitution for a federalist state. It is an intergovernmental document that leaves most of the things closest to people's hearts under the control of the various governments. Each decides on its own model of healthcare, education, level of taxation, pensions, unemployment policies, etc.

See EU *on page 2 ...*

News

Same-sex marriage debate is over – in the political arena

Same-sex marriage, long debated and fought over, is now certain to become the law of the land. Canada is the third country, after The Netherlands and Belgium, to recognize same-sex unions as marriages.

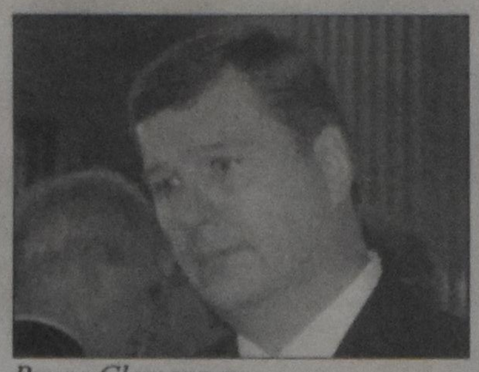
Only a week or so earlier the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) appeared before a committee to argue for amendments to Bill C-38 to provide further protection for freedom of religion and the right of churches to refuse to solemnize such marriages. But the writing was on the wall: the support of the redefinition of marriage was there. The Liberals successfully framed it as a matter of equal rights. A surprising number of Liberals did vote against it, as did most conservatives. But it wasn't enough.

The bill is expected to make it through the senate without delay. There, Liberals outnumber the opposition almost three to one.

All the provinces except Prince Edward Island, Alberta and the Northwest Territories have already ruled that restricting marriage to heterosexual couples violates the charter.

P.M. Paul Martin declared: "The vote is about the Charter of Rights. We're a nation of minorities, and in a nation of minorities, you don't cherry-pick rights."

Stephen Harper did say that if the Conservatives win the next election, the law will be revisited.



Bruce Clemenger

It hardly seems likely, however, that once passed, the legislation will be undone.

Bruce Clemenger of the EFC said, "Parliament is embarking on a social experiment that removes the language of husband and wife from the law and eclipses its ability to champion the rights of children to know and be raised by a mother and a father."

He complained, "Rather than our concerns being taken seriously, we have been made to feel that our beliefs about marriage are unCanadian and contrary to the Charter."

"The EFC cannot by reason of faith, conscience, practice and teaching accept this new definition of marriage and we will continue to promote and uphold marriage as the exclusive union of one man and one woman.

"Our pastors and churches will promote marriage as a covenant before God," he added, "and will provide pre-marital and marital counseling. We are committed to supporting marriage and family, and caring for lone-parent families and children without parents."

Most Canadian media applauded the legislation as a witness to the world of Canada's multiculturalism and tolerance. We don't have to agree with the redefinition of marriage to recognize that the impulse behind the action is rooted in a certain generosity and tolerance. In fact, that has become such a powerful dogma that most Canadians are now unable to grasp that one can have equal rights for gays and lesbians without redefining marriage.

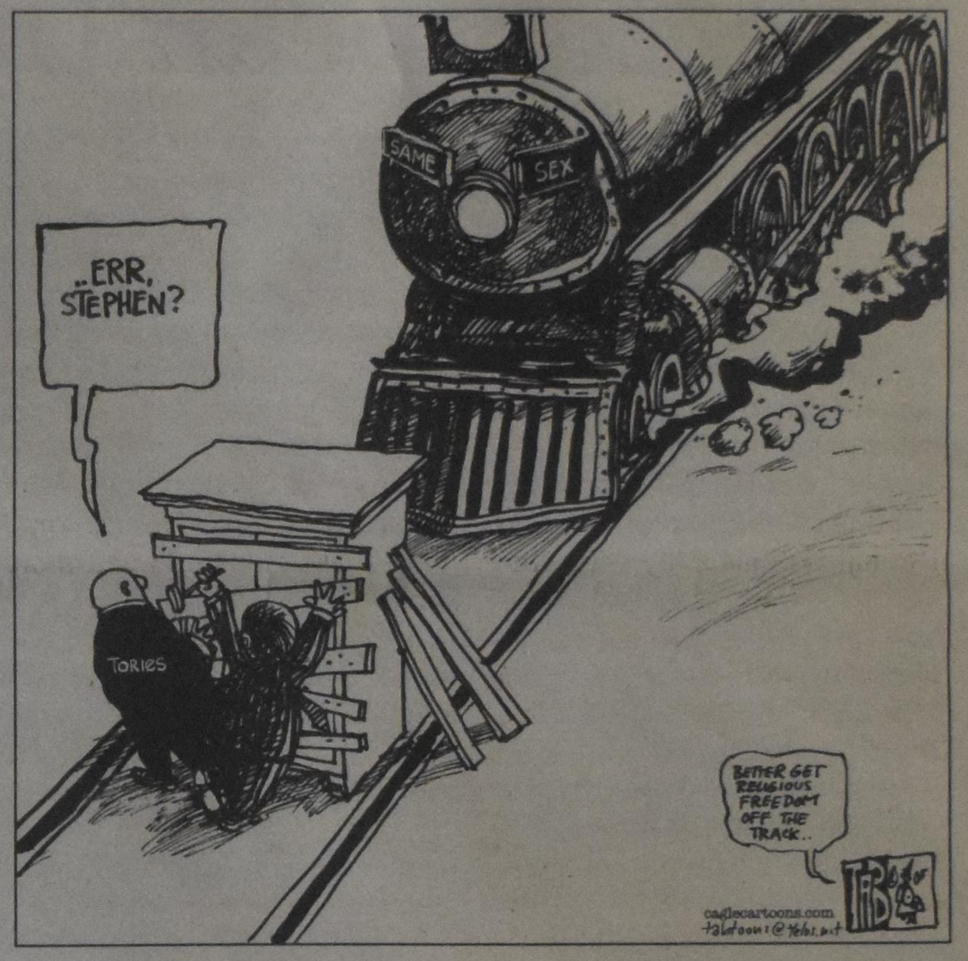
Writing in the *National Post*, Father Raymond de Souza, an able critic, declared that marriage is now reduced to merely a sexual relationship. I don't believe that is true – not for heterosexual couples and not for same-sex couples. For those who seriously and lovingly enter into such a relationship it cannot help but become much more.

De Souza takes issue with Andrew Coyne's expressed hope "that marriage may have the same civilizing effect on homosexuals that it does on heterosexuals, encouraging stable, monogamous relationships and the social values that go with them." He points out that since 1967 the Canadian government has been systematically weakening the marriage bond. But that doesn't invalidate Coyne's hope. And I believe Christians, however strongly they may disagree with this legislation, may pray that it does work to the good of those who enter into it.

It remains to be seen whether this redefinition of marriage actually will further subvert traditional marriage as many opponents of same-sex marriage have claimed. With a divorce rate of about 40 percent in Canada (even higher in the U.S.), the institution of marriage has not fared well even under the traditional definition.

The best way for the Christian community to witness to the divinely ordained nature of marriage is to make good, enduring marriages ourselves. We have not done that. Divorce statistics among Christians don't differ very much from the average.

The legalization of gay marriage will, however, put added pressure on conservative churches to recognize them as legitimate. So although the debate is now pretty well over in the political arena, it will only intensify in the churches.



EU *continued from page 1*

The EU provides a single market with some common standards and greater global influence (in security as well as trade). He points to the great achievement of a Europe at peace instead of a constantly at war. And the EU has also "succeeded in extending its community of law and democracy more widely into central Europe."

These are great achievements, so the EU is worthy of appreciation, argues Berlaymont, but the temptation to inflate it into something greater is partly to blame for this talk of crisis.

Gerhard Schröder, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Jan Peter Balkenende, Dutch Prime Minister, & Jacques Chirac, President of France

William Pfaff, in an article titled "What's left of the union?" in the *New York Review of Books*, sees the crisis as provoked by the expansion of the EU to the point that it has suffered a loss of identity. The quantitative change has precipitated a qualitative change. The EU sought expansion so that it can act in a more concerted way, but this expansion has introduced a diversity of viewpoints that makes concerted action very difficult. (This is, incidentally, not a new insight. In his 1998 book *Explaining Euro-paralysis*, Jan Zielonka cites many analysts who came to similar conclusions.)

The countries that have been given this European core its added to the EU, says Pfaff, have traditions and cultures more or less distant from the core countries. EU membership has been a catalyst for reform in countries like Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Greece, improving governance and stability, but now expansion to countries like Turkey "threatens the integrity and survival of the EU itself."

The voters have intuited this; hence, their no votes. Some level of shared identity, suggests Pfaff, is necessary. It is the basis of national identity and patriotism. As Europe expanded beyond anyone's ability to envision such an identity, becoming a limitless abstraction, it lost the loyalty of the voters. But they were not rejecting the EU as it has emerged over the last five decades, says Pfaff; they were rejecting an EU that they see as unworkable. They want a Europe with limits.

What is it, however, that has identity, however hard it is to define? A shared Christian history, says the Catholic intellectual George Weigel. However diverse and however much diluted, it is this Christian heritage that has shaped the values and the culture of Europe to the present day. But, despite pressures from Christians to acknowledge this debt to Christianity and the Church in the constitution, the framers would have nothing to do with it – partly, no doubt, because they were wooing Turkey.

Of course, it would have been no more than a formal gesture, for more and more people in the European core are voting against that Christian heritage with their feet. They are walking away from the churches and away from the Christian faith. Little wonder, then, that there is an identity crisis. And it is not likely to be solved by either Blair or Chirac.

Politics

The Canadian Medical Association calls for renewed debate about healthcare

At the end of June, the Canadian Medical Association announced that it would debate the role of private healthcare at its annual meeting this summer.

The issue has become so ideological that Health Minister Ujjah Dosanjh immediately attacked the president of the CMA, Dr. Albert Schumacher, for the temerity of conducting such a discussion.

"I am wondering where Dr. Schumacher wants to take the CMA," he asked.

Schumacher and other CMA members want to reflect on the recent ruling by the Supreme Court that seems to open the door to private services if the public system fails to provide them on time.

Canada's health minister seemed ready to quash discussion of other possibilities. The CMA said it was not going to discuss the abandonment of medicare but how certain limited forms of private care might improve the system, which is the possibility raised by the justices.

Schumacher responded to Dosanjh's remarks by suggesting that politicians "set aside dogma" and stop treating private services like a bogeyman. He expressed the hope for a more mature debate than has happened in the past, when anyone mentioning privatization was immediately interpreted as a proponent of US-style healthcare.

In the aftermath of the Supreme Court ruling, numerous articles have pointed out that two-tier healthcare has always been with us. Many companies provide extended benefits to their employees – such as dental care, chiropractic services, several kinds of therapies and drugs. Such insurance plans cover these benefits entirely or in part. Even government employees have such benefit packages, and the government pays for them.

Michael Kirby and Wilbert Keon, two Canadian senators, argued (in the *National Post*) that it is possible to restructure the system for greater efficiency without creating a parallel system. The government, they suggest, is too fixated on who owns what. Healthcare providers should be free to purchase services from the most high-quality and most efficient source, regardless of who owns it.

They cite a report on home care and nursing homes that concludes that ownership makes no difference on the quality or cost of service. Cataract surgery is another example that they cite. Why have waiting lists in hospitals when private clinics can do the same thing more efficiently and more cheaply?

The senators lauded the Court's ruling for cutting through the myths, untruths and distortions on which debates about healthcare have been based for years.

Guy W. Giorno, a lawyer who once worked for Mike Harris, wrote an article in the *Globe and Mail* explaining that the Canada Health Act does not forbid private health insurance. The Act states only that any provincial plan that doesn't measure up to certain standards – accessibility, comprehensiveness, public administration and universality – may not receive federal funding.

Only provincial regulations, and only in six provinces, prohibit private insurance contracts that cover services already covered by medicare. In the four provinces where private insurance is perfectly legal, the demand has not been high enough to make it viable.

"Where's the government debate?" asks Adam Radwanski in the *National Post*. After dismissing the Supreme Court's ruling with a "No one wants that!" Paul Martin and the Liberals seem to have put it out of mind. And the best critique the Conservatives have been able to muster is that the Liberals haven't been spending enough on healthcare, complains Radwanski.

"At the very least," he suggests, "our national leaders might have been expected to help Canadians interpret what the ruling really means, and what choices lie ahead of us. But they haven't even bothered to do that. And so Parliament heads toward its summer recess with no forward medicare movement; only the sense that, with each passing day, we're moving closer to the doomsday scenario hinted at by the Supreme Court – the one in which the single-payer system is no longer sustainable."

Christians and Muslims both say Islamic law triggers Nigeria conflict

Obed Minchakpu

Kaduna, Nigeria (ENI) – Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims has claimed thousands of lives in the northern Nigerian state of Kaduna in recent years say Christian and Muslim leaders, seeking to build bridges to prevent such clashes in the future.

"We have had a series of religious conflicts in this state between Christians and Muslims, from 1987 to 2004," the Rev. Joseph Hayap, secretary of the Kaduna State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) told Ecumenical News International in a recent interview.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch had on May 25 issued a report saying it was again urging the Nigerian government to implement "recommendations to put an end to the cycle of violence once and for all, not only in Plateau and Kano states, but in all areas affected by inter-communal conflict".

Hayap noted: "The religious crisis in 2000 alone claimed over 3000 lives." He said, "The Christian Association of Nigeria has been working hard towards dialogue with Muslim leaders so that religious conflicts that have now become common in Nigeria can be halted."

Colonel Abubakar Umar, a Muslim, and a former military governor of the state of Kaduna, earlier in the year in Kaduna City, cited a figure of 10 000 deaths due to religious conflicts in Kaduna State in four years. These conflicts were, he said, triggered by the implementation of the Islamic legal system, the Sharia, by Muslim leaders in northern Nigeria, which had led to the persecution of Christians there.

"Needless to say that that has caused the current strained relationship between Christians and Muslims particularly those residing in the north [of Nigeria]," Umar had noted at a media conference on March 28.

On June 9 Christian leaders in northern Nigeria submitted a memorandum to the country's National Political Reform Conference, cataloguing cases of persecution and discrimination against Christians.

The conference is expected to draft a revised constitution, which will then be presented to Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Archbishop Peter Jatau and Elder Saidu Dogo, both officers of the northern Nigeria chapter of the CAN, expressed concern in the memorandum that while Nigeria's constitution professes a secular status for the nation, state governments in northern Nigeria are promoting and propagating Islam using public funds. Twelve northern Nigerian states presently implement the Islamic legal system.

The conference, which began on February 21 was adjourned on June 21 and gathered 400 delegates from across the country to Abuja, the country's federal capital city. A final session of the conference is scheduled to start on July 11.

Tutu 'thrilled' about Gordon Brown's Marshall Plan for Africa

Ray McMenamin

Dublin (ENI) – South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu says he is "thrilled" at plans by the British finance minister Gordon Brown to cut debt for the poorest nations, many of them in Africa, and to increase development aid.

"A vibrant economy [in Africa] would be a great deal better for all than an Africa that is overwhelmed by poverty, disease, conflict and corruption," said Tutu of items discussed at a July summit during in Gleneagles, Scotland, by leaders of the Group of Eight (G8), the most industrialised countries.

Brown has dubbed his proposals a "Marshall Plan for Africa" after the economic recovery programme for post-Second World War Europe propounded by the then US Secretary of State George C. Marshall.

"No one said Europe had to pull itself up by its own boot straps," noted Tutu, a Nobel Peace Laureate, who during a visit to Ireland this month commended the work of Irish musicians Bob Geldof and Bono for using their celebrity status to raise awareness of the plight of Africa.

"It is in the interests of the G8 countries to create a more stable and prosperous Africa," said Tutu.

On June 11, finance ministers of the G7 – G8 countries minus Russia – in London agreed to wipe out US$40 billion of the debts owed by 18 of the world's poorest countries to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, an amount that could rise to more than US$50 billion in 18 months' time.

"With 25 days to go until the Gleneagles summit, now is the time to build on the decision to write off 100 per cent of debts owed to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to double European aid and to ensure the treatment of all Aids sufferers," Brown, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, told *The Guardian* newspaper.

Tutu said he was very hopeful the "leaders of the developed world will help Africa out of the morass" when they meet in Gleneagles. "As long as conditions of poverty continue in the world they will drive people to be desperate," he said, in the context of what has been called the war on terror.

Of the protests and demonstrations planned around the G8 summit, Tutu said, "The more people who attend, the better, as it gives hope and encouragement to those who are seen as the victims."

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Editorial

European civilization and revelation

Harry der Nederlanden

"We live in a world whose very reality is revelation," said Evan H. Runner in *Hearing and Doing*. I was reminded of this statement as I was reflecting on recent developments in Europe against the background of its long history.

We don't just turn to Scripture to get our bearings; we study history, culture and society as well. We study them through the lens of Scripture, but we study them in the belief that they will reveal something to us. If we are to have wisdom and discernment, we must also know the times we live in.

But to make the confession that God is revealing himself in everything around us and to come up with an interpretation on which all people of faith will agree are two different things. Often events are no more transparent to us than they are to those who know nothing of Scripture or of him who is the very center of human history.

These are the thoughts that forced themselves on me as I read about recent events in Europe and wondered about its future. The EU is floundering. Yet, only last year we saw the publication of several much-discussed books that extolled the virtues and the future of Europe – largely by contrasting it to the American way. Is Europe a model to be emulated? Or is it a senescent civilization, ageing quickly, losing its vitality and sense of direction, undergoing a profound identity crisis?

Over the last 50 years European leaders have done a marvelous thing – a good work. They transformed an area of the world plagued by conflicts and wars into an association of nations joined in cooperation and peace. That's quite an achievement and provides a little positive context for the current focus on its troubles.

But it is not only the inability of the newly enlarged EU to agree on a constitution and budget that has prompted talk of a crisis.

Christian critics like the Catholic intellectual George Weigel have been talking about a crisis in "civilizational morale." He links it to a loss of roots – spiritual roots. The core countries of Europe, those that founded the EU, have virtually jettisoned the Christian tradition, refusing even to acknowledge in the new – rejected – constitution the central role that Christianity and the Church have played in the formation of Europe. You may recall that the late Pope John Paul II used the term "cultural vandalism" to describe this omission. It was really an excision of the very heart of that history.

Of course, we don't have to possess a very detailed knowledge of that history to recall that among the elites of Western Europe this rejection of Christian faith and revelation has been going on for at least 400 years. But now it is no longer just the intellectual elites who have turned their backs on the church and what it confesses. In the core countries of Europe the great majority have stopped going to church; worse, they no longer give the basic truths of Christianity a second thought.

Christians can point to the numerous churches and cathedrals that mark the European landscape as testimony to the central role Christianity has played in the creation of European culture and society. At the same time, however, the fact that most of these churches are virtually empty come Sunday testifies to something quite different. Those empty churches cause us to grieve for Europe.

Many *CC* readers can recall a time when these churches were filled every Sunday, some twice, when they were at the very center of life, when they inspired and mobilized entire communities to all kinds of constructive work – to the glory of God.

The empty churches, suggests Weigel, have led to another sort of emptiness. Weigel points to the falling birth rate as a symptom of the loss of civilizational morale. Despite the fact that they are healthier and wealthier than ever before, Europeans are in effect voting against the future by refusing to bring children into this world. If it were not for the influx of immigrants – many from Muslim countries – The Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy and Spain would gradually be emptying out like the churches.

Weigel writes: "By the middle of this century, if present fertility patterns continue, 60 percent of the Italian people will have no personal experience of a brother, a sister, an aunt, an uncle or a cousin; Germany will lose the equivalent of the population of the former East Germany; and Spain's population will decline by almost one-quarter. Europe is depopulating itself at a rate unseen since the Black Death of the fourteenth century."

In a recent sermon for the Back to God Hour, David Feddes referred to this as "cultural suicide," for it means not just the disappearance of certain ethnic groups, it means the disappearance of a culture that took hundreds of years to develop, the disappearance of a culture that has deep roots in the Christian faith. It is suicide because it is not the result of a "clash of civilizations," a conflict in which the Christian West is overcome by a largely Muslim East. Even if the birth rates were not far below replacement, something else would eventually occupy the vacuum left by the loss of faith in Europe, and the traditions and institutions would eventually begin to crumble like many of the empty churches, or morph into something very different.

Should we care? What difference does it make to us whether the inhabitants of Europe are of old European stock or whether they hail from somewhere else? After all, in Canada most of us are originally from somewhere else, and we don't mourn that fact. The new immigrants in Europe have, in fact, brought signs of hope. In Denmark, where church attendance has long been very low, there's a resurgence, but a high percentage of those going to church Sunday morning in Copenhagen are immigrants from Africa. That is reason for hope.

Still, we have reason to worry about the disappearance of European culture. Not so long ago Europe assumed that its cultural ideals – its view of the person, of democratic government, of liberty and justice, and its great gifts of science and the free market economy and much more – were universal. This was everyone's future. This was the way to happiness and fulfilment for all human beings. All peoples who followed the voice of right reason and the deepest impulses of the human spirit, it was assumed, would eventually follow a similar path of development. Francis Fukuyama made this argument with new vigor around the time of the collapse of the USSR: in history all roads lead to liberal democracy, he argued.

Most of us have grown wary of that claim. When I went to high school and college, our history books were still constructed to recount and celebrate Western culture and history as the source and repository of almost all the great gifts of civilization. Democracy, the responsibility of the rulers to the people, the ideals of liberty and the worth of the individual, separation of church and state, trial by jury and equality before the law, free enterprise and the free market, the equal status of women, marriage based on love – all these and more are products of Western history. Many Christian thinkers saw these as fruits of the Christian faith; they argued that, even when such ideas were developed by non-Christian thinkers, they were the product of a Christian view of the human person, of history, of nature and government. This is the soil in which they grew and the soil they need to flourish.

Nowadays we have very different histories. This same heritage is shown to be the root of almost all our ills. European science and technology have brought us global pollution and unsustainable development. European governments have spawned nationalism, imperialism, wars and weapons of mass destruction. European cultural pride has brought us racism and the destruction of traditional cultures around the world. The Christian tradition has suppressed the voices of women for centuries and created abusive family structures. European capitalism has plundered the world of resources and turned those of us who live in the northern hemisphere into greedy consumers.

It is true that such histories are often one-sided and unfair, but they are part of the total picture. Because such views of history often depict religion as the source of all intolerance, we are quick to deny their validity. But in our eagerness to save our Christian heritage we must not fall into the trap of trying to save the bathwater instead of the baby.

Paradoxically, this deep and wide-ranging critique of Western culture is itself a product of that culture. It is in the West that this great freedom to publicly criticize reigning orthodoxies, powerful governments and rich elites has arisen. This, too, can be seen as one of the fruits of Christianity, for it is the biblical faith that allows for no other ultimate authority beside God, and it is the Word of God that authorizes and empowers each and every one of us to call others, including the authorities, to obedience to that Word. It is that Word and that faith that calls us to examine ourselves, our hearts and our lives, and to repent from our former ways.

That call to repentance and conversion is a response to God's promise that he is making all things new. It introduces a radical discontinuity into our lives and into history. It is not up to us to save the goods of the past; in fact, it is not within our power. We can only seek to be faithful and obedient in the present, to seek the glory of God and the good of our neighbor, and then we must leave it up to God to establish the works of our hands. It is God alone who builds his Kingdom – often on the ruins we have made.

Maranatha; come Lord Jesus.

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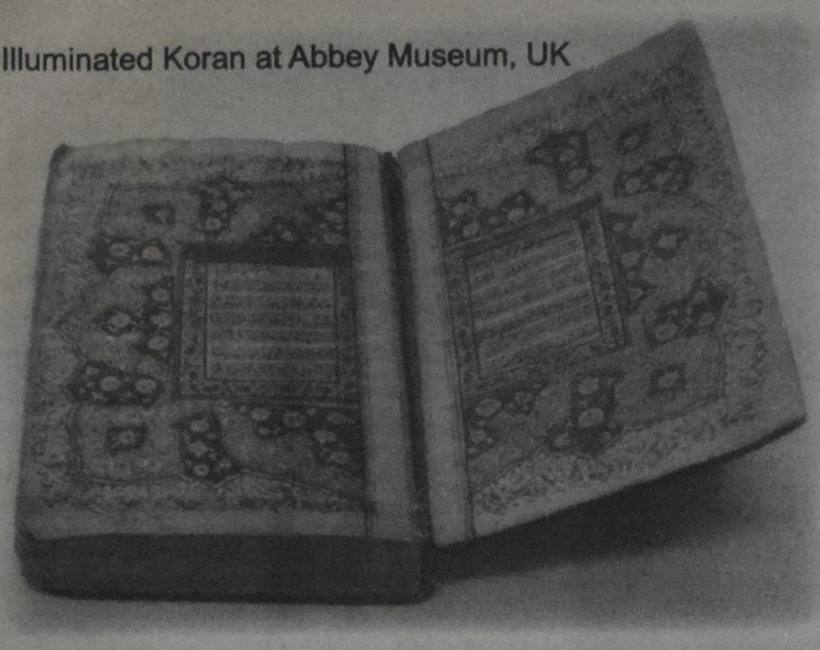
Opinion

With friends like these...?

Harry Antonides

Islamic countries apply a double standard on [the] treatment of "Holy Books" and people who differ in faith and practice from Islamic dogma. While Islamic groups in the United States are engaged in "sensitivity training" sessions for non-Muslims that have included federal workers, the Ohio National Guard and U.S. Air Force Academy, there are no such sessions for Muslims to teach them tolerance for non-Islamic faiths. Quite the contrary. (Cal Thomas, *The Washington Times*.)



Illuminated Koran at Abbey Museum, UK

Opinions about America's place in the world, especially its role in Afghanistan and Iraq, are bitterly divided.

Americans are suffering from the same division so that pro- and anti-war factions have split the nation into two antagonistic camps. In Europe, the clamor against the U.S. is overwhelming, though not in the countries recently liberated from their previous Communist masters. In Canada, opponents, especially among the political, media and academic elite, outnumber supporters of America.

Desecrating the Koran

This is the context in which the arguments about the war are now being played out in the world press. The problems faced by the Bush administration are exacerbated by a press that for the most part is not only critical but even venomous. This fact has again surfaced in the controversy surrounding a story that American guards at the Guantanamo Bay prison had desecrated the Koran by flushing it down a toilet.

This story first reported in the May 9 issue of *Newsweek* spread like fire in tinder-dry grass. The result was a storm of outrage and demonstrations in the Muslim world that reportedly led to the death of 16 protesters and injuries of many more in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

It made little difference that the *Newsweek* story was soon retracted, since many did not believe the retraction. Instead, in the mainline Western press and even more so in the Muslim press, the reasoning went that even if this particular case of Koran desecration did not happen, abuse of prisoners and offending their religious sensitivities are occurring on a large scale.

Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*: "I am talking about the war-on-terrorism P.O.W. camp at Guantanamo Bay. Just shut it down and then plow it under. It has become worse than an embarrassment. I am convinced that more Americans are dying and will die if we keep the Gitmo prison open than if we shut it down. So, please, Mr. president, just shut it down."

Democrat Senator Joe Biden said, "This has become the greatest propaganda tool that exists for recruiting of terrorists around the world."

Amnesty International's 2005 report on the state of human rights in the world claimed that the "detention facility at Guantanamo Bay has become the gulag of our times...." It also accused the U.S. of war crimes, and its executive director of AI–USA called on foreign governments to prosecute American officials traveling abroad.

This odious comparison with the Soviet Union's death camps where millions were killed is deeply insulting to the memory of those who perished, their families – and now to the U.S. military. But this kind of outrageous attacks on the American attempt to destroy one of the most murderous bands of terrorists is a telling indication of the state of mind even among leading human rights "experts".

The Canadian Islamic Congress, led by Dr. Mohamed Elmasry – famous for his public statement that all Israeli citizens are legitimate targets of Palestinian killers – declared that *Newsweek* had merely caved in to pressure from the Pentagon and the White House. Elmasry demanded that *Newsweek*, since it "plays a significant role in forming North American public opinion ... "do the right thing and stand up for the truth," by recanting its earlier recantation.

The Council of American-Islam Relations (CAIR) weighed in: "The allegations, if true, can only serve to fuel anti-American sentiment. Vague assurances of a military investigation are insufficient to keep this incident from being used to further harm relations with the Muslim world. We urge President Bush to initiate an open probe of the incident, make public its findings and punish those responsible."

CAIR helpfully offered its services to the government in conducting its investigations. (Readers should know that an Al-Qaeda manual instructed its trainees that in captivity they "must insist on proving that torture was inflicted on them " and "complain to the court on mistreatment while in prison."

Playing the Islamophobe card

Dr. M.A. Muqtedar Khan, in an article posted on the CAIR website, "Why Koran Desecration is Worse than Abu Ghraib," wrote that the desecration of the Koran "represents a spiritual, emotional and psychological torture of all Muslims."

He explained that Muslims revere the Koran because they accept it as the literal word of God, the eternal miracle of Prophet Muhammad, their direct link to the divine, and the most important symbol of their religion.

Dr. Khan, a Fellow at the Brookings Institution, wrote that this episode of reported desecration, despite *Newsweek*'s retraction, is more proof that under the cover of the war on terror the U.S. has made Islam and Muslim religiosity its real target. He claimed: "It will take more than a retraction and another empty 'Pentagon enquiry' to ameliorate the anger, the hatred and the disgust towards the U.S. that is now felt widely in the Muslim world."

This message of hatred and contempt for the U.S. has been drummed into the minds and hearts of the Muslim community in the U.S. and the rest of the free world. The Islamic leaders are remarkably adept at exploiting the freedom of thought and the press in the U.S. to foster distrust and hatred toward that country.

The stark reality is that these same Muslim critics would not have the slightest opportunity similarly to attack and demonize governments anywhere in the Muslim world. In fact, it's much worse than that. In all the countries controlled by strict Islamic law, Christians and other non-Muslim citizens are stripped of their rights and freedoms, and Muslims who convert to a different religion are committing a crime punishable by death.

Ironies galore

The facts are very different from what Islamic leaders would have their followers believe. Though individual cases of abuse have occurred, such instances are not systemic. U.S. authorities have conducted numerous investigations, laid charges and issued sentences against service men and women who have abused and cruelly humiliated prisoners.

The military has also issued strict instructions to those in charge at the Guantanamo Bay prison, now housing some 520 men. The government has gone out of its way to accommodate the religious convictions of the prisoners.

They are each supplied with a copy of the Koran, their prayer and dietary requirements are respected, they are well fed, and provided with medical care. Here are some instructions to the guards for treating the Koran, as reported by Diana West and posted on the townhall.com website.

She writes that guards are required to handle the Koran "as if it were a fragile piece of art." According to the prescribed operating procedure, guards must "respect the dignity of the Koran" and when a copy needs to be moved by some one other than the detainee or a fellow believer, then a guard must put on clean gloves in full view of the detainees. He must use two hands when handling the Koran "in a manner signaling respect and reverence." But then he is instructed to take care that the right hand "is the primary one used to manipulate any part of the Quran due to the cultural association with the left hand." No detail is overlooked, for the guard is instructed to convey the book inside a "clean, dry detainee towel."

West reminds us that these elaborate instructions for showing respect to the Koran has to do with the fact that according to Islamic teaching, *Christians, Jews and other non-Muslims are unclean and therefore unfit to handle the Koran.* Hence the call for gloves and clean towels.

Where in the annals of all wars throughout history has ever such consideration been shown to enemy combatants and to their religious sentiments? But that makes no difference to the Muslim critics; for this

See **With Friends**... *continued on p.7*...

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60th Anniversary

From rebellion in northern Alberta to Mayday celebrations

For many years Mrs. Tini van Ameyde of my home town Beverly, Alberta contributed regularly to *CC*, especially in her "Alberta aan de lijn" (Alberta online) column. In *CC* June 27, 1958 she reported on an uprising in Alberta's Peace River district. A commission appointed to study northern development by Alberta's Premier Manning proposed a new railway line to be run to Great Slave Lake, but the best – that is, the cheapest – route would pass far to the east of the most populated area in Peace River.

The folks in Peace River were outraged, of course. The Alberta government had been encouraging farming and settlement in the Peace River district for decades, and now those farmers were being by-passed for bigger dreams of wealth, wealth from deep under ground rather than from the soil. Protest meeting were held in various northern Alberta towns.

Failing to get satisfaction from meetings with Premier Manning, they sent a delegation to B.C. to Premier Bennett asking him to extend the border of B.C. to include the Peace River district. Radical stuff!

But I traveled the roads in northern Alberta about this time. After a bit of rain, the rear end of your car was always trying to pass the front, first on the left and then on the right, which made meeting oncoming traffic rather exciting. They badly needed a railroad.

After the roads dried, cars raised such a thick cloud of dust that you had to hang back a quarter mile to be able to see anything, which made passing almost unthinkable.

Trucks would create a washboard effect on the gravel roads, which was very edifying, for it enabled us all to sing vibrato in the car.

However, the roads were very hard on a car's suspension system and tended to loosen bolts and screws. Every home up north was surrounded by rusty cars that had vibrated to pieces and simply disintegrated in the front yard.

But the hulks were visible for only a short period in the spring. After a few weeks they disappeared in the tall grass and weeds – along with old washing machines, barrels and bits of machinery.

But I digress. We were talking about the northern Alberta rebellion. Premier Bennett told the rebels their lovely Peace River valley was one of the loveliest, richest areas in Canada and also one of the most neglected. Alas, he did not send troops into Alberta to try to annex the north. It would have made life more exciting. He did send the B.C. Lions, but the Edmonton Eskimos whupped the tar out of them.

NIEUWE KERK TE BLENHEIM

Mrs. Van Ameyde expresses her sympathy with the poor besieged Premier Manning. Lots of CRC folk in Alberta liked Manning because he also preached the Gospel on the radio. The young people of Maranatha CRC went to hear him preach one Sunday when he was the guest preacher at a Baptist church in the Highlands (Edmonton). He had the most irritating nasal preaching tone I've ever heard. It reminded me of an automobile water pump about to expire. I almost went forward at the altar call just to get him to stop preaching. I guess that must have been Screwtape whispering in my ear.

Alberta is in a different position nowadays. With all the money it stands to make up north, perhaps soon it will annex B.C. and Saskatchewan. But I think Klein's eye is really fixed on annexing Ontario.

But enough nonsense! Serious stuff was discussed at the annual meeting of the Wellandport Farmer's Association in 1958 in Ontario. Is there a future on the farm? asked Mr. Verburg (the report doesn't give his first name, so he must have been well-known).

He quoted from a romantic poem extolling the peace and contentment of the farmer working out in the fields as if he were a man without any worries. But farming is far from being a worry-free occupation, said Verburg.

Many Dutch immigrants risked all for the dream of owning their own farm in Canada – not just for themselves but also for their children. "But is there a future on the farm for our children?" asked Verburg.

He didn't provide easy comfort. He complained about the milk board and the system of milk contracts. A bad farm with poor land, he said, could be worth more than a good farm with good land simply because there's a big milk contract tied to it.

Bulk coolers were forcing dairy farmers to expand, and as a result it took even more capital to run a dairy farm. Pressure to get pricey cows that give milk with high butterfat content further aggravated the situation.

These and other measures made it hard to start a new farm, Verburg said, especially in southern Ontario. But he ended on a note of optimism. Canada is still a land of opportunity: there were still great possibilities in northern Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes and out west.

He described southern Ontario as an area where the clever, efficient Dutch had already gobbled up all the badly managed farms (badly managed by Canadians, of course) so that it was now overflowing with prosperous Dutchmen who had turned it into a veritable land of milk and honey, a new Canaan. He pointed out that it was Lot, not Abraham, who settled where the land looked rich and prosperous.

A striking application of a Bible passage, don't you think? I'm glad he didn't go on to the part where the people of Israel had to spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness before they were allowed to enter Canaan. Most Dutchmen didn't have that kind of patience.

In the Feb. 21, 1958 *CC*, J. vander Vliet, the secretary of the Immigration Committee of the CRC gave an overview of Dutch immigration over the preceding decade. From 1946 to 1957 the CRC had grown from 500 families and 14 congregations to 9,000 families and 130 congregations – all a result of immigration. Well, not quite: it was immigration plus a high birth rate. Those Dutch farmers didn't spend all their time out in the fields. And the city men didn't spend all their evenings at meetings of the consistory, the CLAC, the ARSS, the Christian school association and the music society.

Almost one-fourth of all Dutchmen who immigrated to Canada over that decade ended up joining the CRC. Vander Vliet pointed out that in 1958, the arrival of a boatload of immigrants no longer made the big splash it had made ten years earlier, because now the newcomers were dispersed over a much larger number of congregations. But, as the graph shows, the number of immigrants arriving had also dropped dramatically in the late 50s.

The large drop in 1955, he said, was as the result of a period of high unemployment, which received wide coverage in Dutch newspapers. Vander Vliet scolded all those immigrants who wrote pessimistic letters to relatives back in Holland in 1955. This showed little faith in Canada's future, he said.

The increase in applications for immigration to Canada in 56 and 57, he said, was prompted by fears of war. When Britain occupied part of Egypt to protect the Suez Canal, applications came pouring in from The Netherlands.

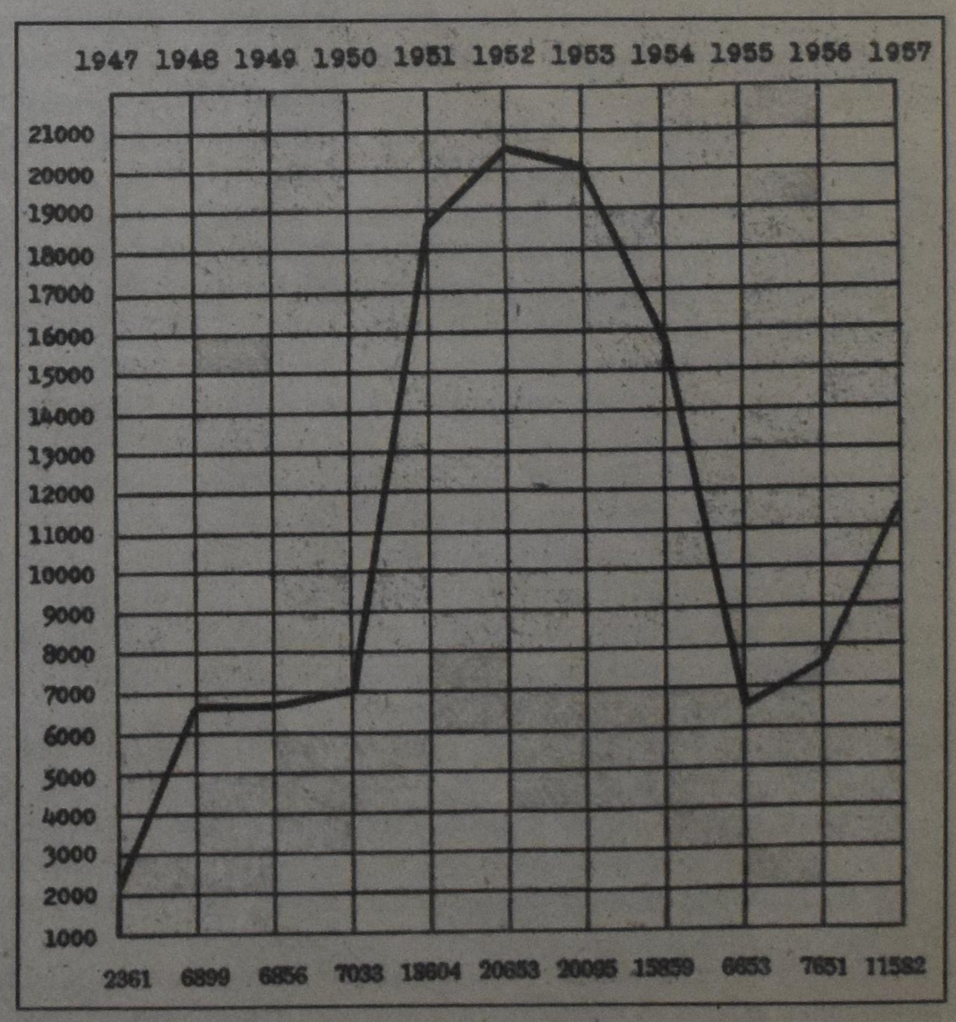
VanderVliet also pointed out that the work of the CRC and the fieldmen had softened many of the anxieties that accompany immigration. Parents knew that a church awaited their children in the new land. Mothers with large families knew that they would not end up isolated but be welcomed by a supportive community.

Some people were picked up Sunday after Sunday for many months, even years, to be transported to church. It was time and money well-spent, he concluded. Although the project of "guided immigration" had not been perfect, it had been the key to the growth of the church.

"Only an immigration sustained by the church and guided by a committee," he argued, "can deliver the kind of results we've witnessed over the last decade."

It may sound like a bit of a self-serving account – Vander Vliet liked his job – but it's undeniable that the work of the fieldmen, however fallible, made a huge difference in the lives of the post-war immigrants. I suspect, though, that more of them ended up with ulcers than with medals.

In May of 1958 the Canada-Netherlands Immigration Council was convened to counter the effect of exaggerated newspaper accounts in The Netherlands about the sufferings of unemployed Hollanders



Anniversary/Stewardship

in Canada. The Council pointed out that in Canada unemployment increased every winter, but admitted that the country had undergone a rough period.

Unemployment among the Dutch, however, it claimed, was much lower than among other groups. And contrary to some reports, there was not a huge exodus of Dutchmen returning to The Netherlands. As a group the Dutch had weathered this period quite well.

In fact – my suggestion – unemployment may have provided more volunteer labor to help erect new churches. I think that was the case in Beverly.

A report on a meeting in Calgary at which Rev. Nonekes spoke on the history of humanism expressed disappointment at the meager turnout. Another report on an ARSS meeting in Toronto chaired by F. Guillaume tells us that only 35 people showed up, and that included several students from Grand Rapids as well as Drs. Evan Runner and Marten Woudstra. Prof. Stanford Reid came all the way from Montreal. After lunch Woudstra spoke about the need for a Christian university in North America.

It seems that not everyone was always enthusiastic about meetings in those days, and not every meeting was equally well-attended. There were other things to be done to grow the kingdom.

In the May 30, 1958, the *CC* editor called a halt to the hot discussion about the future of the CLAC that had been raging in its pages. Some wished to accommodate to existing labor legislation to enable the CLAC to get certification for its locals. Others declared in no uncertain terms that this would be a betrayal of Christian principles. Neither side pulled its punches in *CC*.

A front page issue: Should our Christian schools participate in local Mayday festivities? Apparently the Christian school was invited. There was a parade, a queen was to be crowned, AND a film was to be shown – a Mickey Mouse cartoon!

The *CC* editor didn't answer that question in particular, but he posed the question whether sometimes Dutch Calvinists refused to participate in such things because they saw themselves as superior to those heathen Canadians. (Not really!) He pointed out that we joined in Victoria Day celebrations without any qualms because they resembled similar festivities in The Netherlands.

He concluded that if we refuse to participate we should also be ready and able to give a good answer to why not. In doing that, we would not be withdrawing but giving of ourselves.

Yes, *CC* dished out much good advice over the years – some of it even came from editors.

See related story p.19.

With friends like these...*continued from p.5*

is a war that is different from anything most people can understand. It is suffused with religious fanaticism that easy-going and secular Westerners cannot fathom.

There are at least three ironies that should not be overlooked.

One. The anti-American press pretends to want to protect the U.S. from the fury of the Arab/Muslim community. But its spin on the events surrounding the war on terror is such that it fuels that fury. They are arsonists who pretend to be firefighters. Just read the comments of Friedman, Biden and Amnesty International. They lend a kind of legitimacy to those who daily kill and maim innocent people in order to sabotage the attempt at re-building Afghanistan and Iraq into free and open societies.

Two. The same press that incessantly hammers the U.S. for its efforts to defeat a deadly terrorist force, in contrast is deferential to the Islamic faith. This is why they do not vigorously pursue the link between radical Islam and oppression in a number of countries where there is no freedom of any kind and where departure from Islamic doctrine and practice meets with harsh punishment. Curiously, the steady drumbeat of anti-Americanism orchestrated in the Western press serves as a protective umbrella for those same Islamist oppressors and killers. An extreme instance of this are the pundits, including Americans, who have stated that the U.S. has brought the horrors of 9/11 on itself.

Three. There is another deep irony at the heart of this controversy that is mostly ignored in this debate. The very book that we are demanded to treat with respect and even reverence instructs the faithful to despise and subjugate non-believers, especially Christians and Jews. Diana West is right when she points out that the Islamic concept of *najis* – the unclean infidel – is "a barbarous notion that has helped fuel the bloodlust of Jihad and the non-Muslim subjugation of dhimmitude"

These are indeed perverse and fateful ironies. More about them next time.

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Environmental stewardship: the importance of trees

Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

In the fall of 1982 I had the privilege of meeting Rev. Joseph Wycliffe Sr. and his family. At the time Pastor Wycliffe was in charge of a few small Christian Reformed churches that were established in India by World Missions in the early to mid 1950s. Rev. Wycliffe at the time was said to be in his early 90s, and to me he looked ancient and as rugged as the land in the area. I remember his wispy white hair and long beard, but more importantly I remember the stories he shared with me about some of the history of the CRC Missions' efforts in India and the people who led the way. It was a story of trials, conflicts, disappointments and one of persecution and poverty as well.

But one of the first things that struck me as I arrived by train at Adoni in the province of Andhra Pradesh in India – was how hot, dry, bare, and rocky everything appeared. So much so that we as staff of CRWRC in Asia would refer to Adoni as "a hot rock pile in central India." Adoni only gets about 33 cm. (13") of rain in a year (all in the summer) and it's a struggle for farmers to raise a crop of sorghum without irrigation, or cotton and rice with irrigation.

What was also striking was the occasional large ancient tree that I would come across – and really appreciate as a reprieve from the hot sun. The fact that it was there, led me to wonder, so I asked Pastor Wycliffe what the area was like when he was a child. "O my," he said, "it was far different from what it is now."

He told stories about how at night they took extra measure to protect themselves from lions and tigers roving around their villages – coming in from the forests all around them. He recalled how as children they would play in the cool of the trees and not suffer the heat that we felt the day we were visiting (daytime temperatures reached to 45 C). Living conditions were a lot more tolerable then, he said, with a lot less dust, scorching heat and dry air.

A New Zealand Baptist missionary friend told me about a medical missionary who was stationed at the Vellore Mission Hospital (a few hundred kilometres southeast of Adoni) over 60 years ago. This missionary was visionary in recognizing the importance of trees and sought to curtail the cutting down of trees for firewood. Instead of chopping trees, he began a tree seedling nursery to facilitate the re-establishment of trees around the mission compound. Initially, it took a lot of watering of the young seedlings, but when they took root and their roots penetrated the soil more deeply, the trees became self-sufficient.

Today, the Vellore Mission Hospital is like an oasis in a desert because of these trees. The climate at the hospital is more hospitable than the land surrounding it. The cooling effect and the containment of moisture is obvious and makes the heat much more bearable especially for the patients.

It reminded me of how my brothers, sister and I would rush across a bare hot field behind our house to get to the trees that shadowed the Bruce Trail not far away. We appreciated the reprieve from the hot sunshine; the temperature difference was remarkable.

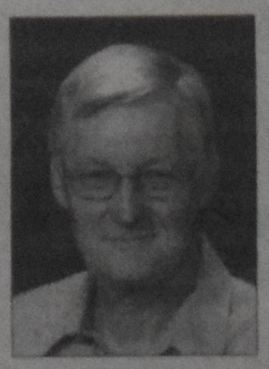
Tree-planting is being used as part of an effort to reduce, contain and even push back the expanding deserts in Africa. CRWRC workers in Mali and Niger are busy raising new tree seedlings and planting them, not only to combat the desertification, but also to provide an additional income source for impoverished people.

Today, many are starting to appreciate the relationship between agriculture and forestry which has led to the growing importance of Agro-Forestry. We are learning that good stewardship means that we recognize the important, almost synergistic, relationship between trees and crops and strive to find the right mix for a particular area. In this case good stewardship is a win-win situation all around: a better economy, more sustainable land use, the reduction of carbon dioxide, the production of oxygen, and more habitable living conditions.

Stewardly Tip: Avoid chopping down mature trees wherever possible. Adjust your new building plans to save mature trees. Plant trees to reduce heating and cooling costs and to recover nutrients buried deep in your soil – by composting leaves instead of burning them.

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

Next issue: Environmental Stewardship: the case for sustainability



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Church

Europe reacts to Turkey's missionary phobia

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) – For the past six months, both Islamist and nationalist circles in Turkey have launched strident broadsides against what even state officials are calling "dangerous" Christian activities.

In the context of a conservative backlash against the secular but overwhelmingly Muslim Turkey's push to join the "historically Christian" European Union (EU), the campaign is not surprising.

For decades, charges that Christian missionaries have a political agenda have been a staple of the Turkish media, often fueled by self-serving political circles. But until now, the government itself has rarely given these claims such open backing.

Yet ever since the EU's decision last December to begin membership accession talks with Turkey, religious freedom has been on Europe's short list of major issues for Turkey to resolve, both on paper and in practice.

During a dinner meeting last week in Ankara with Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, EU ambassadors voiced direct criticism of comments made before the Turkish Parliament by State Minister Mehmet Aydin, whose portfolio includes the state-run Religious Affairs Directorate.

"The goal of missionary activity is to break up the historical, religious, national and cultural unity of the people of Turkey," Aydin had said. Accusing Christian missionaries in Turkey of "ulterior political motives," he claimed their activities "have a historical background," and that "a significant part of missionary activity is done in secret."

According to *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, during their June 15 meeting with Erdogan, the EU ambassadors labeled Aydin's comments "exaggerated and divisive." Belgian Ambassador Jan Mattysen openly questioned Ankara's repeated insistence that Turkey's religious minorities experienced "no difficulties," *Radikal* newspaper noted.

Back on March 22, Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu had weighed in on the controversy, accusing missionaries of taking advantage of sectarian and cultural differences inside Turkey – as well as natural disasters like earthquakes and floods – to evangelize among low-income families.

Answering a deputy's query in parliament, Aksu said that over the past seven years, 338 Muslim Turks had changed their religious identity to Christianity, with six converting to Judaism.

Fabricated Statistics

The interior minister's statistics clearly refuted wild claims in the Turkish media, topped by an unsubstantiated article in the *Aksiyon* weekly of March 28, alleging that 35,000 "house churches" were meeting clandestinely across Turkey.

On a somewhat smaller scale, pages of fabricated charts published by Ilker Cinar, a self-proclaimed ex-missionary from Tarsus, claimed there are 1,800 house churches led by 1,883 foreign missionaries in Turkey, with congregations totaling nearly 60,000.

But in reality, there are only 95 known Protestant congregations, 40 of them meeting in homes. The remainder worship in rented or purchased facilities registered with local authorities as places of worship. Their combined congregations total no more than 3,000, according to the Protestant research group SILAS based in Istanbul.

"There's a reaction against Christianity by Islamists and nationalist groups," observed Ihsan Ozbek, chairman of the Alliance of Protestant Churches (APC). "The missionary issue is being used by them to spoil the relationship between Turkey and the EU."

To these sectors of society, joining the "Christian club" of the EU means risking the loss of their cultural and religious identity.

Back in February, the Turkish *Daily News* had reported that a sermon prepared by the Religious Affairs Directorate would be read in all the nation's mosques on March 11, portraying Christian missionaries as the "new Crusaders." Reportedly this came "as a reaction to missionary activities in Turkey and EU demands for religious expression."

But in an apparent backdown, the directorate's website indicates that a different sermon was preached in its place.

According to Yeni Safak columnist Ahmet Tasgetiren, the inclusion of missionary activities as a threat to Turkey's national security is rooted in "the Islam that lies in the deep conscience of the people of this country."

But *Hurriyet* newspaper columnist Ozdemir Ince, writing on May 2, linked it rather to a common government thesis that Protestant missionaries helped "in the creation of the imaginary [Armenian] genocide" perpetrated 90 years ago by the Ottoman Empire.

Escalating Prejudice

Whatever the root causes, religious tolerance has suffered in the wake of the ongoing media hype and government comments.

"In January there were small incidents of attacks and beatings of Protestants," Ozbek told Compass, "but this has escalated," as demonstrated by recent Molotov cocktail attacks against churches in Ankara, Gaziantep and Izmit. "It's political, because these groups see the EU as the enemy."

Now, Ozbek admitted, "There's an extreme prejudice against Christianity. If we showed the 'Jesus' film now, we could easily be beaten up," he said, even though the Christian documentary on the life of Christ is legally distributed in Turkey.

Last month, the government agency controlling radio and television programs ordered Shema Radio, a Christian radio station in Ankara, to pull its May 18 Bible-reading program.

"We were told to replace it with a documentary on Mersin which they provided," station manager Soner Tufan said. "If we hadn't, they would have fined us $40,000."

The censored Bible text was the first three chapters of the book of Daniel, from the Old Testament.

"We wrote them a reply, saying that if we were committing a crime, then the whole Bible should be outlawed!" Tufan said. "But they didn't accept our arguments." Shema Radio has opened a court case over the issue, to prevent similar censorship in the future.

In addition, seven libel cases have been opened to date by various Turkish Protestant church leaders against prime-time programs on three TV channels which aired slanderous accusations against local Christians. The slurs ranged from spying for foreign intelligence agencies and paying people to change their religion to trying to divide and destroy the nation by alienating Turks from their communities, families and culture.

On June 11, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper devoted nearly a full page

Typical housing in Turkey

to a new state intelligence report titled "Reactionary Elements and Risks." According to the article, the first half of the report examined religious terrorist groups, and the second section focused on missionary activities.

Secularists disagree

Even secularists have taken up the cause, with public complaints from Rahsan Ecevit, the outspoken wife of leftist ex-prime minister Bulent Ecevit, that "Turkish citizens, sometimes by persuasion and sometimes for their own material benefit, are becoming Christians.

"We cannot ignore this activity," Ecevit warned on January 2. "At the time we say that we are entering the EU, we're losing our religion."

But other secularists deride the anti-missionary tirade. With Turkey's non-Muslim population less than two out of a thousand, *Cumhuriyet* columnist Oral Calislar noted, it was hard to see how it could be considered a political threat.

"Think of Germany," Calislar wrote on January 9. "Almost three million Muslims from Turkey have settled there, setting up hundreds of mosques and propagating their faith. Most of their imams are sent and paid by the Turkish state." So in Turkey, Calislar declared, "Just as Muslims consider it a right to propagate their faith, so Christians, Jews and atheists have the same right."

Turkey's Mazlum-Der human rights organization has also criticized the overt campaign against missionary activities, declaring back in mid-January that this "supposed threat" was being used to restrict freedoms of expression and religious practice in the name of national security.

"People who campaign against missionary activities make non-Muslims a target," argued Mazlum-Der director Ayhan Bilgen. "These people also fabricate fears, to legitimize the restriction of religious freedom.

"In Turkey, where secularism has been interpreted unilaterally … some believe it is their right to intervene in religions as they like," Bilgen told Turkish Daily News on January 14. "The freedom of expression should be guaranteed by the law and its implementation."

On paper, Turkey's new reform package of laws put into effect on June 1 makes it crystal clear that it is legal to express and promote one's religious beliefs and meet for worship accordingly.

"Missionary activity not a crime, but a right" declared a front-page banner headline in Radikal on June 12. According to the details of Articles 115 and 215 of the new penal code, the daily stated, it is actually a crime punishable with three years in prison to "prevent or obstruct anyone from expressing or changing their religious, political, social or philosophical views or from meeting for religious worship."

But unless the ruling Justice and Development Party changes its rhetoric, one Turkish Protestant pastor told Compass, it will be guilty of spreading "active disinformation."

"The government should be pro-actively educating the police, the judiciary and the press about freedom of religion," declared Zekai Tanyar, chairman of the APC's legal committee. "It should stand up openly against media attacks, instead of deliberately turning a blind eye to them."

Researched by Rajiv Lee in Istanbul.

China: crackdown on Christians

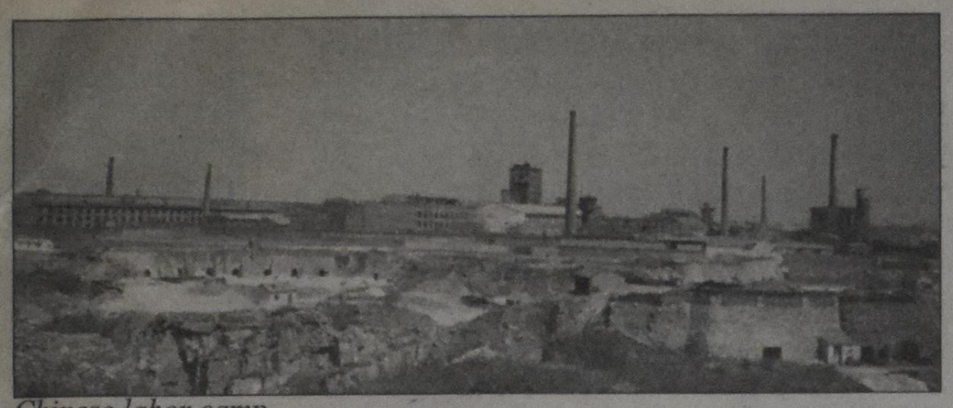
Elizabeth Kendal

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) knows the greatest threat to its totalitarian rule is internal. The CCP watched as a coalition of intellectuals, workers and the church brought down Communism in Poland and Central Europe. To control internal pressures the CCP uses a tool of the Mao era: "re-education through labor," involving a vast gulag of over a thousand concentration camps or slave labor prisons known as "laogai".

The laogai system lets local officials or the central authority lock up large numbers of people on administrative sentences without charge or trial. This is used against those deemed problematic, like drug addicts and prostitutes, or who threaten the status quo, such as political and religious dissidents. The aim of re-education through labor is thought reform, i.e., forced submission to the CCP.

Whilst multitudes of Christians are incarcerated in laogai camps, others are imprisoned on false criminal charges or social security charges. The degree of repression varies widely across the nation.

According to China Aid Association (CAA) and Voice of the Martyrs, on Sunday May 22 police and Public Security Bureau officers raided 60 house-churches simultaneously in Changchun,



Chinese labor camp

the capital city of Jilin province (north-eastern China, bordering North Korea). Another 40 churches in the area were raided over the following days. More than 600 house-church Christians were taken into custody.

As Bob Fu, CAA president points out, "The man-power, coordination and planning involved in raiding such a large number of church meetings simultaneously shows that this effort came from high levels of the Chinese government." CAA points out the raided house-church groups have a majority of university students, professors and other young intellectuals. CAA believes this could be a coordinated campaign to eliminate the house-church influence in the university areas.

While most of those arrested were released after 24 to 48 hours' interrogation, some 100 influential Christians are held in various detention centres.

Hebei province (surrounding Beijing) has the highest concentration of Catholics in the country: some 1.5 million, mostly underground Catholics. Eight of Hebei's Catholic bishops and 13 priests are in prison or missing.

Hebei Catholics believe there are two main reasons why local officials persecute them so intensively: (1) many authority figures are rigidly Maoist with a nostalgia for the Cultural Revolution (which runs counter to the moderate policies of China's President Hu Jintao);

(2) as a smokescreen to conceal the fact that provincial officials have failed to develop Hebei's economy. Catholics in Hebei say violence has been unleashed on them by a Religious Affairs Department that has declared an all-out-war against the Church.

Elizabeth Kendal is a reporter for theWorld Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission (WEA RLC).

African Anglicans will reject aid from US church due to gay dispute

Hobbs Gama

Blantyre, Malawi (ENI) – The head of the Anglican church in Malawi has said his church will refuse financial support from its counterparts in the United States and Canada because of a dispute about homosexuality.

Archbishop Bernard Malango made his comments as he left Malawi to attend a meeting in Britain of Anglican leaders from around the world who are discussing a decision by the US Episcopal (Anglican) Church to consecrate an openly-gay priest as a bishop.

Another issue being discussed at the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Nottingham, central England, is the decision of the New Westminster diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada to authorize a rite to bless same-sex unions.

A commission set up by Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams last year requested the two churches to stay away from meetings of the consultative council but to attend the Nottingham meeting to explain their stance on homosexuality.

"The report strongly condemns these sad developments and therefore we asked the two churches to voluntarily withdraw their membership from the consultative council for a period leading to the next Lambeth Conference [of the world's Anglican bishops] in 2008," said Malango.

He said the Anglican church in Malawi was not willing to accept any financial assistance from the churches in the United States or Canada, or any other church in the world whose leadership promoted homosexuality.

The Malawi church leader's remarks followed reports that the Anglican church in Uganda had rejected an aid package from the US Episcopal Church to support HIV/AIDS projects, despite a funding shortage.

The lack of funds meant the Anglican province had no working phones in its Kampala office, noted the Rev. Alison Barfoot, assistant to the Anglican archbishop of Uganda.

But, she said, Anglican opponents of the stance of the US church on the issue of homosexuality had not pitched in sufficiently to make up the money the Ugandan church had forfeited, "definitely not to the extent of what we have given up".

Rwandan Bishop John K. Rucyahana noted that African churches had suffered by rejecting funds from North America. "To be honest, there is not enough money for the needs we have in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide," he said. "But if money is being used to disgrace the Gospel, then we don't need it."

Three women arrested in Indonesia for running Christian program

Special to Compass Direct

JAKARTA (Compass) — A Muslim council has accused three Indonesian women of attempting to convert Muslim children. Dr. Rebekka Zakaria, Eti Pangesti and Ratna Bangun were arrested on May 13 and taken to the Indramayu State Prison, where they await trial.

Dr. Zakaria is the pastor of Gereja Kristen Kemah Daud (GKKD), or Christian Church of David's Camp, located in the small town of Harguelis in West Java.

In 2003, a public elementary school in nearby Babakan Jati approached the church staff and asked if they would establish a Christian education program for the school.

After the National Education System Bill became law in June 2003, all public schools were required to provide religious education for children of religious minorities attending their schools.

The school in Babakan Jati had no means of providing Christian education, and therefore asked the GKKD church to provide teachers and an appropriate program. The Christian students would then be evaluated at the end of each semester and given the required marks in their school reports.

The women of the GKKD church set up a "Happy Sunday" program, with Christian songs, games and Bible study for the children. The program was run by Bangun and Pangesti, under the direction of their pastor, Zakaria.

After running for approximately 18 months, the number of children attending the program had grown to 40 – but only 10 were from Christian homes.

The Muslim children attended the popular program with the full consent of their parents. Some of them began to sing Christian songs at school and at home, and this attracted the attention of Islamic elders who, in December 2004, forced the church to close down.

The women then continued to run the Happy Sunday program from Pangesti's home.

On March 26, they organized an Easter bus tour to an amusement park in Jakarta. Each of the participating children was given a t-shirt displaying the name of the church and the Star of David logo, so that the teachers could keep track of them during the outing.

The children had also received gifts on other occasions. For example, at Christmas time each child was given a carry bag.

During the tour, one of the children asked for and received a Bible from one of the teachers.

As a result, Islamic leaders approached church staff and demanded that Muslim children no longer be allowed to attend the program. A complaint was also made to the Indramayu District Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) council. As a result, the local MUI chairman, K. H. Muzakir Mahmud, made an official complaint to the Indramayu police.

A local Islamic leader interviewed four of the Muslim children who had attended the Happy Sunday program and recorded their answers on video.

The children were asked whether the women had ever offered them money, to which they responded, "No." However all the children said they had received gifts, and one told the interviewer that he had asked for and been given a Bible.

On May 13, the three women were arrested and taken to the police station for questioning. They were accused of breaching the Child Protection Law. If convicted, they could be sentenced for up to five years and fined 1,000,000,000 rupees ($103,600).

Pastor Edward Monijong, the head of the GKKD Synod wrote a letter of appeal to the MUI chairman, Mahmud, asking that the women be released. Mahmud agreed to drop the case.

However, an influential lawyer acting for the MUI Council refused to drop the case. He also asked that bail be refused for the women, which meant they were unable to live at home under house arrest and take care of their own children.

One source, who declined to be named, visited the women last week at the prison. Apart from being "eaten alive by mosquitoes," all three were in good spirits; apparently many visitors had come to express their support and encouragement.

Meanwhile, legal assistance has been arranged for the women, and their lawyers are currently preparing for a trial that could make headlines in a country still clearly divided along religious lines.

Ethics

"Honey, does this make me look fat?"

Little white lies and why we tell them

Jon Dykstra

"Your wife discovers some flowers in the kitchen and thanks you with a hug and a big kiss for 'such a thoughtful surprise!' You bought the flowers for your secretary in honor of 'Secretaries Day' at the office. You can either take the credit for thoughtfully buying your wife flowers or you can tell your wife that they weren't intended for her. Do you tell her the truth, yes or no?"

This question was part of very odd but interesting game – to win it you had to successfully predict what your friends would do in different moral dilemmas. Almost everyone in the room thought a little white lie wouldn't be too bad an idea in this case (both the men and the women), but the question was directed at Glenn and he thought differently. Lying to his wife just wasn't an option to him; this was supposed to be his most important earthly relationship so marring it with needless dishonesty seemed silly to him. Sure, his wife wouldn't be quite as happy with him at that moment, but if she knew she could count on him to always be honest, even in the small things, then she would know she could count on him in the big things too, and wouldn't that benefit his marriage far more than a little extra undeserved credit he might get from saying the flowers were for her?

Going beyond the Nazis at the door

When Christians debate the issue of lying it's most often in the context of whether we should always tell the truth – should we, for example, tell the truth if Nazis come to the door and ask us if we are hiding Jews?

But in her book *Anatomy of a Lie* Diane Komp notes that very few Christians are confronted with these sorts of extreme situations – few of us are ever faced with a circumstance in which telling the truth might put someone's life in jeopardy.

Instead, she says, we lie for far more trivial reasons: it just seems easier. Telephone solicitors get the "we can't talk right now" response whether we can or not; the waitress asking "How are you?" is given a "good" whether we are or not; children who want to play with Mom or Dad are told "later" whether there will be time then or not. We lie because it seems the quicker thing to do, because the "half-truths" we're telling seems harmless enough, and because we doubt the sincerity of the people around us ("He can't really want to know how I'm doing, can he?"). And after awhile we start lying simply because we've gotten into the habit. Then we do it so often we don't even notice ourselves at it anymore.

"Honest, honey, you look perfect - except perhaps your hair could use a little work."

The scariest part of Komp's book was the chapter in which she suggested the reader, over the space of a few days or weeks, record "every time you lie, or are tempted to, and ask yourself the question 'why?'"

I was horrified at the results of my own experiment. I found myself lying not just regularly, but for no reason at all. For example, I set my own hours and often work late into the morning, sometimes until 2 or 3 a.m. and yet when someone called me at 8 a.m. I felt the need to pretend that they hadn't woken me up since I had already "been up for hours." And though I work for the most part by myself and so hardly even have the opportunity to lie regularly (as they say, it takes two) even in my solitary setting I found ways to lie a dozen or more times a day. The only explanation I could come up with for some of my fabrications was that it was a habit, one so engrained I no longer noticed doing it.

Of course not all lies are motivated only by habit. We also lie to protect ourselves, to either cover up something we've done or failed to do. Would the husband at the beginning of this article feel any temptation to lie if he regularly remembered to get his wife flowers? Of course not; then it would be only a minor thing to tell his spouse that this time these flowers were for someone else. But because he's neglected his wife for so long there is now a temptation in these circumstances to take credit for thoughtfulness the husband hasn't had for his wife for quite some time.

Harmless?

So the more important issue is not whether it is alright to lie to Nazis at the door – that's hardly a relevant question to most of us – but rather whether it's alright to "stretch the truth" again and again.

The Bible is, of course, quite clear about the need for honesty and the value of truth in our day-to-day lives (Col 3:9, Lev. 19: 11-12). We find that the very character of God prevents him from ever lying (Num 23:19) and indeed Christ is so inseparable from honesty he is called "the truth" (John 14:6). So if we want to imitate him then we too should be concerned about honesty.

Still there is a temptation to dismiss the "little lies" we tell as harmless.

So let's consider some everyday examples: how many parents make a habit out of lying to their kids, making promises they can't keep and making threats they don't carry out? When a parent's "no" doesn't really mean "no" how can they be surprised when their children don't accept that as the final word? Experience has taught these kids that Mom and Dad's "no's" are at best half-truths, because half the time a bit more badgering will result in a favorable "yes." And how many wives can expect an honest answer from their husband when they want his opinion on a new dress. It's become almost a game for some, ferreting out the truth – in some cases experience has taught the wife that when she wants an honest answer from her husband it's best to look at his eyes rather than rely on the words that come from his mouth. She has to look to his body language for an honest reaction because she can't count on it verbally. So when he tells her she looks beautiful she's never quite sure if that's what he really thinks because that's what he says all the time. This husband will find it hard to offer his wife any encouragement because even his genuine efforts will be met with skepticism.

These are just the effects that are most evident. In some circumstances we may not be able to deduce the harm caused by a bit of deception – who gets hurt when we lie to a telephone solicitor? – but perhaps the harm comes simply from the fact that if we are not habitually honest we all too easily become habitually deceptive. And sin, even small sins, separate us from God (and would do so permanently but for the grace of God) so we should never dismiss any sin as inconsequential.

The first step to a more honest life is to start off by keeping track of your deceptive impulses. Give it a try and do as Komp suggests, even if only for a day: record every time you lie, or are tempted to lie, and ask yourself "why?" Then, when you become more aware of your sin and the misery you may be causing, you can go to God in prayer and ask him for forgiveness, more aware than before about your desperate need for it.

And then, after that, maybe you can think of your wife and go buy her some flowers.

IT'S NOT LYING TO...

Be tactful – Some wives are overweight. Honesty doesn't demand that their husbands tell them: "Honey that dress, and every other one you own makes you look fat, cause you are fat." Being honest doesn't mean you have to be hurtful. Instead, if the husband doesn't like how a dress looks, he could say, "Honey you look much nicer in your blue dress; this one doesn't look nearly as nice." True, and tactful.

Use figures of speech – When I say I am so hungry I could eat a horse, I'm not lying. No attempt at deception was made. I am simply using hyperbole (purposeful exaggeration) and a figure of speech to communicate the truth that I am far more hungry than usual. The Bible also uses figures of speech and hyperbole (just think of the text in which Jesus says to follow him we must hate our mother and father (Luke 14:26)) and this too is not a matter of deception.

Withhold some information – For your grandmother's 90th you bought her a beautiful necklace, but now she wants to know if it was expensive. If you admit that it was, she probably won't accept it, but you really want her to have it. Being honest doesn't mean you have to tell her how much it cost – dear ol' grandma can be told, "I can afford it, and it would mean so much to me for you to have this." God is our example here: he knows all, but he certainly hasn't told us all, so he too withholds some information.

Graduation

Graduating in God's Grace

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

When I was asked recently to be the parent speaker at my daughter Davita's Grade 8 graduation, I accepted the invitation with fear and trembling, and prayed much as I wrote my speech. This year our school community has experienced several tragic deaths. It was probably for that reason that the graduating class chose as its theme Romans 8:38-39: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What did Paul's words imply for the graduates and our Christian school community? What do they imply for you and your children? Here's how I answered those questions.

Certain sounds remind us of our childhood. For me, one such sound was the ringing of a gong.

I lived in Korea with my missionary parents from the time I was nine-years-old till I was thirteen, the same age as many of you graduates are now. When my parents wanted to call my five siblings and me home for supper, they rang this gong. In my imagination its bong, bong resounded through the compound where we lived. I could hear it when I was playing with my friend, Mary, in the fort we built of old wood slats. Its clear, resonant sound reached me when I played among the grave mounds in the ancestral burial ground behind my home – a place I probably shouldn't have been racing around in. I could hear its peal as I came back down from hikes on the mountain my siblings and I had nicknamed Saddleback, close to where we lived. Its ring could be heard from the valley at the foot of our compound.

Its sound carried to the places of death and the places of life; it reached up to heights and down to valleys. It was a sound of my past that still lingers in my present, and which I will recall in my future.

The gong called me to come for nourishment. But it did more than that. It called me home – to a place of love, belonging, and certainty.

Paul's words remind me of what this gong did for me as a child. They boldly sound the notes of God's gifts of nourishment, love, belonging, and certainty in the places of death – like the ancestral burial ground I ran through; and in the places of life – like the fort I played in; in the heights – like Saddleback Mountain; and in the depths – like the valley below the compound. And it's not just a sound that is relevant to the past. It reverberates in the present. And its notes will ring triumphantly in the future.

That love of God which surrounds us is rooted in what Christ did for us – his death for our sins, and his resurrection. In Madeleine L'Engle's novel, *An Acceptable Time*, one of the characters, Polly – who is in grave danger – recalls the words of a favorite family hymn. This hymn vividly portrays what Paul's words imply:

Christ be with me,
Christ within me,
Christ behind me,
Christ before me,
Christ beside me,
Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ in quiet,
Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. (Crosswicks, Ltd., 1989, pp. 302).

Paul's words point to God's love that has been present at all of your graduations. All of our graduations? You graduates might ask. Isn't this the first time we're graduating?

No, it's not! At least it isn't according to what my 20-year-old daughter, Tamara, wrote when she was 8-years-old in grade three. On the top of a scrap piece of paper she wrote "GRADUATING" in bold upper-case letters. Beneath that she penned the following list: mom's womb, babysit (she was referring to the nursery at the church), kindergarten, Sunday school, Grade 8, Grade 12, teenager, adult, grandparent, death – and in parentheses beside death she wrote,"Go to heaven."

Tamara's childhood perception of graduations is profound, realistic, and accurate. God's love was present, graduates, when your moms gave birth to you – a real graduation, just ask any mother! His love pursued you as you crawled, toddled, and then ran. His arms embraced you as you entered kindergarten, and he never let go of you in all the intervening years until today. And he plans to hang onto you through all of your graduations, like the ones Tamara mentioned, and lots of others that she didn't mention. He'll hold you solidly! Securely! Steadily! No one has eternal wrap-around-arms that exude love like God does!

As I reflected on the theme, I noticed that it doesn't pulsate with an outward display of joy like some other biblical passages do. Take for example, Psalm 95:1 – "Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation"; or Psalm 126:3 – "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." Paul's words are written to those who are suffering. And they are words for us in our suffering. This past year, the deaths of people we love have sent us reeling. We have grieved deeply and continue to grieve. We have felt the jarring pain of loss and the turmoil of unanswered questions. But even then God's love never let us go.

It is only through the power of God's Spirit working in our hearts that we can speak with the certainty that Paul speaks with in this passage. In Avi's novel *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, one of the characters – who has a difficult time trusting others – says, "As God in Heaven knows, both wheat and trust take a full season to grow" (Hyperion Books for Children, 2002, pp. 88). Yes, God does know that at times we have a hard time trusting that we will never be separated from his love. He knows us inside out. He knows we are frail. He knows that at times the future scares us. But still he doesn't withhold his love.

In fact, we can't escape it. Remember what David said in Psalm 139:7-10: "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."

So, we know his love is certain. But what difference will that knowledge make in how we live? Graduates, what difference will it make in the choices you make in high school, in the way you treat your peers and your families, in the way you handle blessings, and in the way you cope with adversity? Parents of graduates, what difference will this remarkable biblical truth make as you slowly let your children go? Friends of Christian education, what difference will it make as we all together write our history?

Write our history? you may ask. Yes, that's what we are doing. In an essay entitled "Orientation of the Heart," Vaclav Havel, the former president of the Czech Republic, wrote, "History is not something that takes place 'elsewhere'; it takes place here; we all contribute to making it" (*The Impossible Will Take A Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*, edited by Paul Rogat Loeb, Basic Books, 2004, pg. 89). He wrote these words three years before the 1989 "Velvet Revolution" that toppled Czechoslovakia's dictatorship.

Our history is taking place here. My prayer is that when people look at our lives today, and when they remember us in the future, they will recall a Christian school community that made choices based on the knowledge of God's unfailing love.

War remembrance

Hunger winter: The German checkpoint

In the last chapter Sietze Jongsma narrowly avoided a Nazi raid while staying with a baker who was also hiding a Russian escapee. A passer-by advises him to change his route to avoid dangerous areas, but they cannot avoid the Ijssel Line, which he is told is closely guarded.

The baby buggy was becoming ever harder to push. The broken wheel was wobbling so that I had to tip it to one side. But we were getting closer to the Ijsel Line, stretching my nerves to the utmost. I didn't want to take the time to try fixing the wheel.

After we arrived in the city of Kampen, we decided to try the same strategy that had worked earlier by the concentration camp at Amersfoort. We hoped it would get us by the closely defended Ijsel Line as well.

Once again I went ahead with the children while pushing the baby buggy, while my wife followed at some distance with the bicycle.

When we came to the bridge across the Ijsel River, we saw that it was guarded by a single German soldier. With wild audacity and wildly beating heart, I started across the bridge without so much as a glance at the soldier, who was standing near the center of the bridge.

As I drew up to him, the soldier said nothing. And neither did I. When I glanced at him, our eyes met for a second, and that was all. Quickening my step, I crossed to the other side of the Ijsel Line with no trouble whatsoever.

A short time later my wife crossed the bridge pushing the bike. The German soldier asked her whether her bike needed fixing, and he seemed to be willing to help her with repairs so she wouldn't have to walk.

Getting across the Ijsel Line was a huge load off our minds. One of our biggest worries was now behind us, but as a result we were much more keenly aware of our weariness. Where would we find shelter and something to eat on this quiet Sunday evening? We had no idea.

But so far we had found a place to stay every night, so our hopes were still high.

When we were passing through the outskirts of Kampen, we had met two elderly men who had shook their heads in sympathy when they saw us miserably trudging along. They asked us where we were headed. When we told them, adding that we were very tired and looking for someplace to stay, one had directed us to the hamlet of Grafhorst, some 5 km farther.

He told us about a ferry man who was a good sort and who often helped strangers and gave us his address. Although we were exhausted and the baby buggy was becoming unmanageable, we were determined to get there.

At last we came to the small hamlet. It looked impoverished. The streets hardly merited the name. As soon as we spotted someone, we asked after the ferry man. We were pointed to a small but newer house along the canal, where we stopped to ask for shelter for the night.

The man seemed well-inclined but said he first had to ask his wife. After they had talked it over, we were invited in. The couple was not very social and said few words but in short time we learned they were simple people with hearts of gold.

Before it became too dark, I repaired the buggy wheel as best I could. And then I went inside to help our host make room for five unexpected guests. The small attic was divided into two small bedrooms where we could sleep.

After everything was set, we settled into the small living room, soaking up the warmth after a long day out in the cold. Our hostess brought out two huge loaves of rye bread and cut us thick slices, buttering them generously. She handed them around to us very simply, without setting the table or putting out dishes. Here simplicity was a mark of truth.

After praying together, we sunk our teeth into our hunks of bread, and they tasted like honey. It was excellent rye bread and we were allowed to have as much as we wanted. I'm ashamed to tell you how much bread we ate that night.

Apparently everyone in the hamlet had heard about our arrival, and one by one they stopped in to satisfy their curiosity. The entire evening the room kept filling with people, young and old, men and women, coming and going. The men smoked pipes and cigars, offering me one as well. It turned into an enjoyable evening in which we became acquainted with a number of local customs.

We retired on time, for the ferry man had to get up on time to ferry the farmers and laborers across the canal. The bedroom was cold, but we crawled deep under our blankets and were soon sleeping like roses.

It was still dark when we awoke the next morning. It was Christmas. But we still had a ways to go, and after we had been served breakfast, we said our thank-yous and goodbyes and once again we were on our way. Our host gave us an address in Genemuiden, where he suggested we would be welcome to stop for coffee.

The ferry man, however, warned us that crossing the "black water" in Genemuiden was dangerous, for it was heavily guarded by the Germans. The road to the town followed the polder dike. Once again, we were seized with anxiety.

Eager to get across the so-called "black water", we did not stop for coffee but headed straight for the ferry. Here we ran stuck. We were not allowed to get on the ferry without the proper papers, which we did not have.

Not knowing what to do, we turned back and looked for the address our host of the previous night had given us. The man served us coffee and cakes, but he couldn't help us further. To cross on the ferry we needed papers signed by the local mayor. But it was Christmas, so the office was not open. Besides, the man was a Nazi collaborator, so our chances of success were slim to none.

An hour later we were back on the road, but no farther than before. A passer-by directed us to the local evacuation office, but when we arrived there, we discovered that it, too, was closed for Christmas.

We slowly trudged up and down the same street a couple of times, unsure of what to do. The locals watched us miserably dragging ourselves along as they sat in their living rooms enjoying their holiday. At last one of the doors opened and one of the inhabitants of the town asked if he could help us.

He told us how to get to a Red Cross station. They often took people across the black water, he said.

Buoyed with new hope, we went on and once again we had to tell our story. They too told us they could only transport us if we had the right papers. So we were back in the same fix, trudging around without any idea what to do next.

The man who had pointed us to the Red Cross once again came to our aid. This time he himself accompanied us to the home of a trustworthy policeman. But the man was not home. His wife, however, took pity on us and invited us in. While she served us delicious soup, she called some of her husband's colleagues to get advice. At last, not getting an answer, she directed me to the home of another police officer who was also of the right sort. After stopping to ask directions several times, I at last found the house.

But it was his day off, and he preferred not to be disturbed on Christmas. I didn't blame him. He was of the opinion that it was pretty well impossible to get the required papers on Christmas day.

Discouraged, I headed back.

But that didn't stop the officer's wife. Some time had passed and her husband was due to come home at any time, so she invited us to wait. It was almost 2:30 by the time he came home.

When his wife told him what was needed, he too didn't give us much hope, but his wife insisted. After pondering the problem a bit, a light came on. While the wife prepared more food for us, the policeman went out. He returned a short time later with a few of his colleagues. I quickly gathered from the conversations that I could expect nothing from the Nazi mayor.

The only thing left to do, they decided, was to steal the necessary papers from the town hall and to forge the mayor's signature. They were taking huge risks. But by 3:30 the signed papers were put in my hand.

Armed with these papers, I returned to the Red Cross station, where they quickly prepared to bring us and our baggage to Blokzijl in the Red Cross vehicle. When Ankje and the children, the buggy and the wagon were aboard, however, there was no room for me. I followed along behind on the bike, carrying one of the suitcases.

The entire neighborhood turned out to see us off, waving and wishing us a good journey. Genemuiden can be proud of its policemen. The Red Cross vehicle rode onto the ferry and I followed.

On the other side, however, waited the German soldiers, ready to check our documents. Even from here, I could smell trouble. I wasn't at all sure that this would work. Hundreds of thoughts flitted through my head as the ferry approached the other side.

As soon as I stepped ashore, two husky soldiers stepped toward me, brusquely demanding to see my papers. Meanwhile, the Red Cross vehicle went on by with Ankje and the children. I was the only one who was held up. With trembling fingers I produced my papers and my identification.

The two gentlemen examined them very closely. They did not seem inclined to let me go.

What I feared happened. They began to interrogate me.

They objected that I had no business in Friesland and that I was probably too lazy to work. They had a remedy for that: they had plenty of work for me to do, they said.

In the meantime, the Red Cross vehicle had passed from view. My wife and children were safe.

Family/Law

Christian morality and public law: three secular arguments

Albert Mohler

What should be the relationship between Christian morality and public law? This is a quintessentially modern question. In other eras of Christian history, or even the history of Western civilization, to ask what should be the relationship between Christian morality and public law would have been incomprehensible. Most people would have understood morality and law to be either one and the same thing, or else they would have seen public law merely as a tangible structure and definition of Christian morality. Throughout most of Christian history and the history of Western nations, law and morality were conceived as being on parallel tracks, indispensable to one another. Public laws were simply the codification of a moral worldview.

Now we live in a day in which that understanding is completely changed. With the advent of modernity – and now the postmodern age – the view that public law is or ought to be predicated on Christian morals is no longer taken for granted. Not only is that idea questioned – it is even rejected out of hand. There are many in Western societies who are now absolutely convinced that there should be in fact no relationship whatsoever between Christian morality and public law. For these, it is just as axiomatic that public law should be essentially secular, as it was once axiomatic to believe that it must be essentially Christian.

That ideology, properly known as secularism, suggests that there is an oughtness to the secularization of the public space, that the culture indeed ought to be established on purely secular terms without any reference at all to a theistic reality or a theistic accountability. Secularism as an ideology has never been well-accepted in America at the popular level. It has, however, become rather pervasive at the level of the cultural and intellectual elites, a necessary component in the elite class's struggle to advance their own norms and values system. The persons who sit on federal judiciaries and hold positions of symbolic importance and cultural influence tend to hold this secular worldview, at least with a tenacity and in percentages far beyond that of the general public.

And what do these people say about the intersection of Christian morality and public law? For the secularist who believes that America's public space should be essentially and irreducibly secular, that question is easy. There should be no relationship at all. Public law should not be dependent on Christian morality, and Christian morality should have no influence on public law. Indeed, laws should never be determined or even shaped by any institution or idea that is self-consciously tied to Christian morality – or even un-selfconsciously derivative of Christian morality.

Let me offer three examples of those who hold to such a position. First is Robert Reich, the former Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration. A former faculty member at Harvard University, Reich is a thoughtful person to whom we are indebted for many insightful writings. Recently, Reich has written a new book entitled, *Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America*. In this book he identifies the opposition – those who hold the worldview which should be countered and defeated – as the "radcons," a short compound for "radical conservatives." The individual who stands as a symbol of the "radcons" is William Bennett, former Secretary of Education and drug czar. The "radcons" believe that morality must be based upon some larger worldview. Christianity should be recognized and respected as the worldview that gave shape to Western Civilization, they argue.

So what should be done with the "radcons?" Reich said this: "It is perfectly fine for radcons to declare strong personal convictions about sex and marriage, convictions often based on sincere religious beliefs. But it is something quite different, it is quite another thing to insist that others must share these same convictions. As I have said, the liberal tradition has wisely drawn a sharp boundary between religion and government. We've got to stop the radcons before they impose their narrow-minded agenda any further."

And then this, as he parodies the "radcon" understanding of descent down a slippery moral slope: "Here is a real slippery slope that does concern me. Once we allow radcons or anyone else to decide how we should conduct our private sex lives, where would it end? If we accept the idea that one religion's view of proper morality should be the law of the land, how do we decide whose religious views should prevail?" Robert Reich is one example of a person who believes Christian morality should have no voice in the public square.

A second example is Robert Audi, professor of philosophy at the University of Nebraska and the nation's most noted advocate of a pure secular space in terms of public policy. Audi offers three principles for what he calls "civic virtue in a liberal democracy." The

See **Secular arguments** *p. 15...*

Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

A letter to my son

Dear James,

The day we brought you and your "womb-mate" home from the hospital your father held each of you tenderly in his arms. He examined your little hands and feet and marveled at the way you so firmly grasped his finger within yours. (I didn't have the heart to tell him it was a reflex.)

He told Stephanie how beautiful she was and that he hoped she would be as smart as her mom. He gazed at your sleepy face and welcomed you to the farm, anticipating that you'd love it as much as he did. Then he gently whispered, "Someday you'll be a man."

I stand amazed at how quickly his words have come true. Somewhere along the line, when I wasn't looking, you grew up. You are today the same age as we were when you and Stephanie were born. I have no idea how all those years disappeared. Or maybe I do.

I've been right here beside you. I watched you learn to walk and talk and ride a motorbike - all essential skills. I saw you grow from a chubby-cheeked, cuddly baby into a rough and tumble school boy and into a charming (well, mostly) teenager. I helped you with your schoolwork, forced you to brush your teeth, and made you get a haircut now and then. I threatened to put your guitar and amp into a garage sale when you got tired of practicing. (I'm so glad you didn't give up.) I taught you how to do your own laundry, make the perfect "dip egg" and drive standard gear. Yeah, I know you caught on fast, but I still taught you.

Believe it or not, I learned a few important things from you. You taught me that everyone is unique, and there is often more than one way to get things done. You taught me to respect the gifts and abilities God gave you, and to be wise enough to let you do things your own way, with the exception of your housekeeping practices (which I notice have improved since you left home). I learned from you that traits like compassion and integrity must be caught rather than taught.

You and your sisters have shown me that if a mother serves her role well, she works herself right out of a job. Almost, anyway. I like to think you'll always need your mom, just maybe in different ways as the years go by.

Remember the day we discovered you were taller than me? You took me out for McLunch to celebrate. I looked across the table that day and began to see a young man instead of my little boy. It was a strange sensation, kind of exciting and scary all at the same time.

But mostly I prayed for you, James. I always asked God to give you two things - a persevering spirit and a forgiving heart. I wanted you to persist through life's challenges and come out of your struggles shaped a little more the way God had in mind. And I wanted you to be able to forgive others - especially me - so that we could always be close, even when I took away TV time so you could do more homework, or made you write lines for things like forgetting to make your bed. I hope you've forgotten half of the things I've done and managed to hang onto memories of the good times we've shared.

And here you are - about to get married. You've come home with a bright and beautiful young woman. She is kind, intelligent, fun to be with, and best of all, she loves you. I couldn't have made a better choice myself. Not that you would have let me.

This is an age when record numbers of marriages end in divorce, and when even some in the church want to redefine marriage itself. It's tempting to make speeches about our first year of marriage and warn you of the problems and pitfalls of adjusting to life with each other. I have all kinds of good advice I could give you and Willene.

But I've learned well enough that you two will do it your way, as you should. You'll make some of the same mistakes we did, and others that are distinctively yours. Your love has inspired this commitment, and from now on, your commitment will sustain your love. Meanwhile, rather than lecture you, I'll keep praying that both of you will persevere through the tough times and be ready to forgive each other anytime.

When you were little sometimes I wished you would one day have triplets - three boys just like you. I was joking. But now I'm serious. I hope you and Willene will have a marriage as wonderful as the one God has given your father and me. And maybe someday you'll be lucky enough to have a little boy just like you.

I'll love you always,
Mom

Heidi VanderSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont. Her email: hmvanderslikke@hotmail.com

Happiness is in the present and in doing

A. A. van Ruler

So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him? Ecclesiastes 3:22

On the one hand, says the Preacher in the preceding verses there is the problem of the many injustices that happen in this world and which go unpunished for a long time. On the other, there is also the problem of death, in which man becomes like the animals – unable to see that eventually many injustices and finally all injustice will be avenged.

This doesn't do him much good, however, "For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?" For this a person would need a very strongly developed social and religious sensibility. Then one might be able to rejoice at the fact that no matter what else happens at least the community will be purged of injustice at some time in the future, even if he will never see it himself.

In this case, the individual bypasses himself for the sake of the larger whole, for human society.

A person might also take delight in what happens after he's gone, not just out of social but also out of religious concerns. If the injustices which we are suffering now will be redressed and made right at some future time, at least this would mean that the Lord God is righteous in his doing on earth and that the historical process does not run dead in the desert of meaninglessness.

Nevertheless, there is something abstract about both notions for the individual. So what if the community is ultimately purged and the Lord God justified, if you never get to experience it for yourself? It is a satisfaction that rests, not on experience, but on a mere thought; and thought is never as immediate and vivid as experience.

This is why the Preacher says that a person does not come to this point of view easily. Only the present and what we do with that is really ours. The future isn't here yet and the past is no longer here. Only the present is.

For God, of course, things are very different. Not just that he has experienced the past and will also experience the future. But he also sees it all in a single glance and he sees it all with the same good pleasure. The Lord God totals together into a single unity the entire historical process from beginning to end, just as we total up our lives from birth to death. This totaling up into a unity is an essential element in human personhood. We might also say that totaling up the historical process into a unity belongs to the personhood of God.

But we do not share in this over-all totaling up. We do try. In our philosophical and theological reflection on history, we do try to get an overview of the whole. In fact, this is an occupation that God has given for us to do: God has placed eternity in the human heart. However, we don't get very far in this task. We never gain an overview of all things from beginning to end.

We stand in the middle. In the present. Solely in contemporary reality. That is our lot.

This experience of the present tense, this realization that we are geared to the present and limited to it is an important part of our self-understanding as a created being.

We do try to escape this situation. We pine for the past in nostalgia and yearn for the future. But the remarkable thing is that neither makes us happy. On the contrary, it makes us unhappy. For in the meantime, the present, the only genuine reality given to us, slips through our fingers.

One characteristic of human happiness is this: we can be happy only in the present. If we are not happy in the present, we are not happy at all.

The Preacher expresses this in the words: "So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot." Elsewhere (2:24f; 3:12f), he comments on the fact that this too – rejoicing in his own works – does not lie within his own power. This too must be given us. But here the Preacher explains that this is the only, the only genuine thing, that is given to us – if, indeed, it is given to us.

From this, three things follow. In the first place, that we must concentrate radically on the present. We must not desert our posts. We must not wander about in the broad fields of time and eternity surrounding the now. Those who go wandering this way get lost; they lose themselves in distances so endless they exhaust the eye. That may be alright for God, but it is not alright for the creature. We are not up to it. We cannot encompass it all. A certain modesty, and above all a certain limitation to himself, a concentration on the "I" and on the present are the condition for human happiness.

But, secondly, we must then put our backs into it: we should do something. We must be engaged in something. We must lay hold of ourselves, of life and of the world. If we concentrate only on ourselves and on the present, we will fall into a strange stupor. Eventually we will dissipate ourselves in this preoccupation.

Man's being is realized in being busy with something. This is a matter of boldness. There isn't a lot of reasoning involved in it. It is not a matter of necessity, but engages our freedom. The deed.

Each and every moment we have to hack through a whole series of knots, wipe away a mass of petty worries, overcome hesitations and incapacity, and we must simply seize hold of life and do something. He who does not dare, does not triumph. He who does not dare the deed of life, will not win the happiness of life.

From this the third thing follows: to take pleasure in the deed. There is truly nothing better than that we should take joy in our work. This joy repeatedly threatens to sour. We are assaulted by the question why we are really so busy, whether it isn't all really absurd, meaningless, whether meaning isn't an illusion. But these are temptations from the devil. He is always trying to throw a monkey wrench into the works.

If we wish to live piously – reverently, obediently and trustingly – then we must learn to sidestep these temptations. This is possible only if we put our backs into it; if we just go on with our jobs. Above all, we must take pleasure in it. There is something childlike about this. A lot of adults are somewhat ashamed to do so. Nowadays millions are unhappy because they don't take joy in their occupations. But we can only be saved if we become childlike. The lot that we have been given is to do things in the present.

Israeli scientists grow palm from seed of biblical times

Michele Green

Jerusalem (ENI) – Israeli researchers have grown an extinct date palm from around the time of Jesus in a world first that they hope will help with research into natural medicines used in biblical times.

"The trees that were here in ancient times have been lost to us. Through this tree, we might be able to recreate the forests of the ancient world," said Yuval Cohen, an Israeli botanist conducting DNA tests from the palm's leaves.

The palm was grown from a date seed among those found in an archaeological dig at the desert fortress of Masada where 960 Jewish Zealots committed suicide rather than be taken into captivity by the Romans in 73 AD.

Carbon tests from part of a seed have dated it to between 35 BC to AD 65, just before the Roman conquest of Jerusalem.

Named Methuselah after the biblical figure who lived for 969 years, the palm is the oldest seed ever to have been successfully replanted and has so far produced a tree about 30 centimetres (12 inches) high.

It may however take 30 years for the palm to produce the dates which were reputedly so delicious that some historians believe they were the "honey" referred to in the biblical description of the land of milk and honey.

If it turns out that the palm is male, it will not produce fruit but it will give researchers important information about the palms native to the Holy Land which became extinct during the Middle Ages. The palms grown today in Israel were imported from California.

The ancient palms of Judea, praised in the Bible for their medicinal qualities, beauty and delicious dates, covered the Holy Land from the Sea of Galilee through Jericho and the Dead Sea. Their image appeared on ancient Israelite coins.

"In antiquity, there was a very famous date of ancient Israel, it was one of the most important exports of ancient Israel, it was on the coins, it was of extraordinary importance for the economy, for ceremonial reasons and also for medicinal reasons," said Dr Sarah Sallon.

She heads a research centre into natural medicines at Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital which hopes to study the medicinal qualities of the ancient dates.

Secular arguments ...continued from p. 15

first of these he calls the principle of secular rationale. He writes: "This is a rationale that has as a prima facie obligation not to advocate or support any law or public policy that restricts human conduct unless one has and is willing to offer adequate secular reasons for its advocacy or support."

Secular reasons, that is, must be the sole point of advocacy. "There must be," he says, "a secular rationale that is understood to be a secular reason." The only acceptable rationale is "roughly one whose normative force, that is, its status as a prima facie justificatory element does not depend on the existence of God, or on denying it, or on theological considerations, or on the pronouncements of a person or institution as a religious authority." In other words, any reason given for adopting any public policy must be irreducibly secular, manifestly secular, entirely secular, with no reference whatsoever to the existence or non-existence of any God.

Second, Audi suggests a principle of secular motivation. He explains: "One has an obligation to abstain from advocacy or support of a law or public policy that restricts human conduct unless one is motivated by a normatively adequate secular reason whose sufficiency of motivation here implies that some set of secular reasons is motivationally sufficient, roughly in the same sense that (a) this set of reasons explains one's actions, and (b) one would act on it even if other things remained equal or one's other reasons were eliminated."

In other words, any religious motivation is ruled out of bounds. Not only must a person advocating a public policy position have a purely secular rationale, but his advocacy must be secularly motivated as well. It is not enough to offer secular arguments for a position, if one's real reason for holding it is a belief in God.

Finally, Audi offers the principle of ecclesiastical neutrality. He says, "Churches committed to being institutional citizens in such a society have an obligation to abstain from supporting candidates for public office or pressing for laws or public policies that restrict human conduct." In other words, churches may do whatever churches wish to do, so long as they do not endorse political candidates (a restriction with which most of us would be quite satisfied) or "press for laws or public policies that restrict human conduct." That is more troubling, for most of us would insist that Christians must, as Christians, advocate laws which restrict human conduct in some ways. Most laws do.

A final example is law professor Kathleen Sullivan. Following the same mentality, she said, "The correct baseline theory is not unfettered religious liberty, but rather religious liberty insofar as it is consistent with the establishment of the secular, moral order." That is a fascinating statement, one which amounts to a redefinition of religious liberty. The baseline, she says, is not unfettered religious liberty; those God-believers should be granted religious liberty only so long as their liberty does not interfere with the establishment of a secular moral order.

I bring these three witnesses because I believe they are being honest. Reich, Audi, and Sullivan call for a public space that is purely and completely secular. Not only must the shape and content of the arguments in the public square be secular, but the very motivation for making an argument at all must be entirely secular – as Audi puts it, "without reference to whether or not there is even a God who exists." Any argument based on any premise which might be considered "religious" is categorically excluded. The honesty of these positions is helpful, for it sets the issues squarely – and thus demonstrates immediately the implausibility of such proposals.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. is president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. For more articles and resources by Dr. Mohler, and for information on The Albert Mohler Program, a daily national radio program broadcast on the Salem Radio Network, go to www.albertmohler.com.

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra

"Today I go to Jesus"

A month ago I attended a memorial service for a lovely woman named Margaret. I knew Margaret for a five short years as she attended a weekly music therapy session that I facilitated in her home. Margaret was born with cerebral palsy as well as with what is now labeled an intellectual disability. When Margaret's wonderful sister Beverly asked if I would play the music for the service as well as sing one of Margaret's favorite songs, I was honored and agreed without hesitation.

During the service, Margaret's niece spoke about Margaret's life. With the family's permission, here is the letter that was read on behalf of Margaret.

"Good morning! My name is Margaret Armstrong. I was born in Niagara Falls on May 28, 1940, the youngest of three children to parents that had emigrated from Great Britain. I guess there were some complications during my birth because by the time I was about nine months old, my parents noticed that my development was slower than that of my sisters, so they sought help.

In those days doctors didn't really know much about my problem. With great love and patience, my parents and sisters taught me how to walk, albeit on my toes, how to toilet myself, how to feed myself, and how to ride my tricycle. Now with skills like that, and with my dog Laddie by my side, I felt I could conquer the world.

Although I was growing older, I could never understand why I couldn't go to school, why the neighborhood kids would call me names, or why they would push me off my tricycle, then run away. Was that the reason my parents were thinking of sending me somewhere?

I'm sure it wasn't because I would get on my tricycle with Laddie by my side and go across one of the busiest streets in Niagara Falls so we could visit those nice people who had the ice cream store. I knew that if I went in the store I would get some ice cream. I don't know why Mom was worried about the cars, I never paid any attention to them. All they did was make a lot of noise, honking and honking. I just went and got what I wanted and came home. What was all the fuss?

The day came when the Doctor told my parents it would be better to place me in an institution where I could be looked after more safely. They took me to a far-away place. My parent's weren't there, nor my sisters, nor my dog, not even my tricycle.

What did I do wrong? I was only eight years old. Who were all these strangers? Why did they cut my hair off? Why did they take away my clothes?

I spent the next 24 years at that 'hospital school' and then was transferred to a regional center for two years. These years were spent behind locked doors in endless hours of idleness and barrenness in overcrowded conditions. Both of these institutions were situated on beautiful lakes, but the only time I ever saw them or the beautiful grounds was when my parents came to visit, because our windows were so high up you couldn't see out of them.

My parents had been talking about me with their family doctor and he told them about a place where he knew I would be happy. The application to this new place was made and in 1975 I moved to Vineland, close to my family and my home. Here I was given a room which I shared with four other ladies. I had a dresser for clothes again, I could see out the windows and see the birds and the sun and the rain and the snow. But most of all I saw my parents often. The doors were no longer locked behind me, and I could walk outside or sit on a swing or have picnics with my family and friends.

Every Sunday we went to church and sang songs with the minister, who had a guitar. I love the sound of music. A few years ago now, I was moved again, this time into a beautiful home with three other ladies – they call it a group home. It had a living room with a TV, a combined family room and kitchen with a sliding door that leads out onto a veranda, and they cooked all the meals in the kitchen just like home. My best friends are my counselors who are helping me cope with my new environment. Sometimes I go for drives with my friends in the minivan they have at our house and enjoy the many beautiful sights and events that others have taken for granted.

One summer I went outside and watered the lawn, the flowers, my toes and my counselor's toes. Here I am learning how to put the dishes in the dishwater and help around the house from the wheelchair that I've been confined to in the last few years. Thanks to all my staff, I'm learning to laugh and love and regain a sense of peace and contentment.

I'm 64 now and I don't understand corruption, bigotry, hatred or war. I'm just me. I feel joy and pain and many other feelings that you feel; I just express them differently. It would be helpful if God could develop an interpreter to let people know my feelings and the feelings of people like me.

Today I go to Jesus.

Margaret Armstrong
May 28, 1940 – May 19, 2005

Mendelt D. Hoekstra is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, ON with Marisa and their two children.

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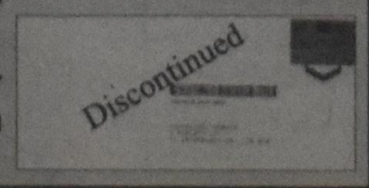


Readers:

Please note:

To give our staff a summer break, we have three weeks between our July 25 and August 15 issues.

(Harry & Roses daughter is getting married)

Our issue dates and deadlines can also be found on our webstie:www.christiancourier.ca

Human moments

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

Culling and cropping moments of beauty

I love the warm summer sun that rounds out the brief rush of spring. I also enjoy the bright and colorful flowers that spill lazily over the gates, railings and property fences this time of year. And I love the mid-day heat that encourages us to seek out the cool and crisp waters of community creeks, lakes, bays and pools. Summer reminds me to enjoy the moment and not rush to my next item on my "to do" list.

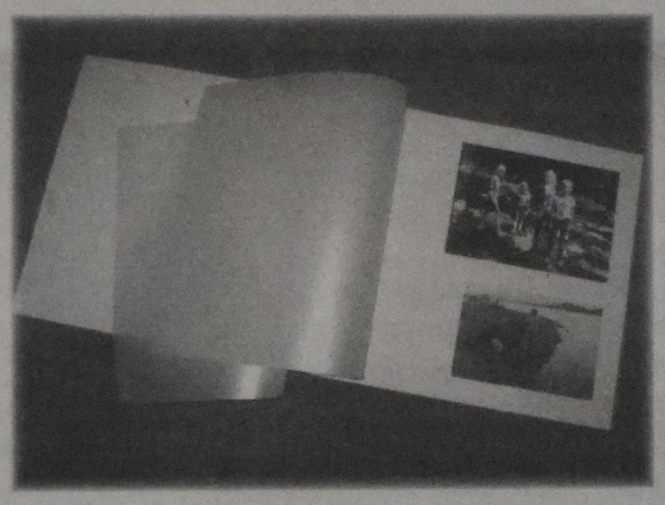
Sitting and enjoying the moment slows the pace of life. A viable antidote to the "hurried syndrome" and the frequent complaint about the "rapid passage of time." Once we sit and enjoy the moment we begin to notice the beauty the world has to offer. Once there, we often wish we could hold on to these special moments, but because our busy world is always with us, they slip easily out of our minds.

Culling our special moments

Still, these moments could help us put the more difficult times of our lives in perspective. How often don't we feel better about our situation when we remember the special times? How often don't we appreciate our family and friends more when we have the opportunity to sit back and recall real moments of mutual caring and sharing?

My latest special moment was when I was traveling down a country road with my son in his truck. The road hugged a winding river and we were casually talking about family life. I glanced out of the side window and noticed the evening sun casting sparkling diamonds on the swirling waters and a dark figure fly-fishing on its banks. I told him the beautiful scene reminded me of the film *A River Runs Through It.* He smiled and understood.

Scrapping and cropping



I don't think I am the only one learning to appreciate the special moments in life. I hear there is a whole community of "scrappers" out there. Not only do they cull and crop photos and other memorabilia into 'easy to add pages' memory albums, they create ornate edges and use decorative mats in an effort to adorn their memorable moments. All of it nicely mounted and labelled according to the mood the scrapper wants to create.

Sounds like a good idea to me especially in the age of the ever popular, digital camera. Which brings to mind a good friend of mine. He has great photographic skills and sees beauty everywhere. He finally bought a digital camera. Now he takes photos to his heart's content.

Still, he laments about what to do with the many pictures he is accumulating. He used to be "much more focused" and "shoot more selectively." After the film was full he would rush to the store to have them developed. Within a few hours he would have a handful of glorious photographs ready to be put in an album and passed around to family and friends.

Now, he is wondering whether he will get the same kind of enjoyment from the photos he is shooting and putting on a DVD. He doubts it, but he is willing to hang in there and learn about the pros and the cons of digital photography.

Still, I believe we can enjoy "more with less" and have decided to streamline my albums. I think twenty or thirty pictures of my childhood would be a great tribute to my growing years. Or how about a one or two-page max guideline per season for my family photo album? That in itself, could become a real treasure.

All of this is really about celebrating family milestones in a way that leaves me with the best of the best. A perfect way to count my blessings!

Arlene Van Hove is now on sabbatical from Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

The river horse

Chris De Vinck

Yesterday I grabbed the straw broom, stepped out onto the deck and began to slowly sweep the leaves and sticks that had accumulated around the picnic table and chairs.

I leaned over as I reached under the table. I flexed my arms as the broom pushed and pulled at the debris. I walked from one side of the deck to the other, and no one noticed. Cars drove by. Children raced down the street on their bicycles. Neighbors carried their trash bins to the road. A man sweeping a deck on a Monday afternoon is no spectacle.

I watched a man being shot out of a cannon at a circus once. I've admired the New York Yankees at the stadium as they performed near magic with a bat and ball. Fire eaters, weight lifters, men walking on the moon – these are the people who attract attention. No one is impressed with a middle aged man in fading blue jeans sweeping a little wood deck in northern New Jersey.

Maybe I ought to place myself in a cage at the zoo where a small sign outside the bars states "Homo Sapien: roams the earth freely, is susceptible to harsh storms, dwells inside various types of housing, sings, talks, and is capable of thinking and manipulating tools." Maybe, then, people would recognize how deftly I can push a broom. Perhaps tourists will stand on their toes for a better view as I reach down with a dust pan and scoop up little sticks and leaves.

Do we have to extract an ordinary man and place him on display before anyone notices?

Last Sunday my family and I drove to the New Jersey Aquarium in Camden, New Jersey. We were all impressed with the penguins and the jellyfish, the bull sharks and the sea turtles, but the greatest show stopper of the afternoon was the hippopotamus.

It was housed in a huge, indoor enclosure about half the size a football field. There was a hill with trees where birds flew from branch to branch. To the left a large beach spread out flat and clean, and to the right, a deep tank of water twice the size of my two story house sloshed slowly back and forth against the wide viewing glass.

Nothing was happening, but then, slowly, two black holes appeared at the surface of the water, then disappeared. What followed was better than a man being shot out of a canon. This hippopotamus, which weighed between 4,000 and 7,000 pounds, gushed out of the water to its mid-belly, then flopped back into the water with a splash, producing delighted gasps from almost everyone in the audience. Then we could see, through the thick glass, the hippo spinning under water like a lithe otter.

We were all startled that something so large could have such ease and agility. How can a creature with a barrel-shape, a huge head, and stumpy legs swim, roll over, leap into the air with fluid grace and dignity?

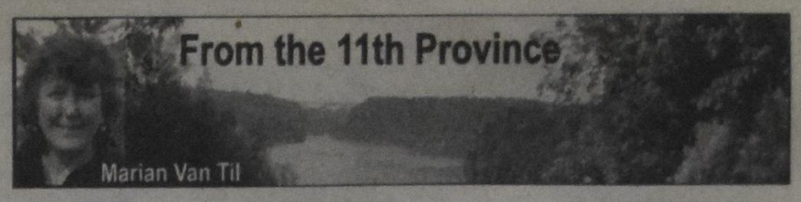
The word "hippopotamus" means river horse. It is a creature that spends most of the day playing in the water, and spends much of the night eating plants.

Willy Lowman's wife, in Act I of Arthur Miller's American classic, "The Death of a Salesman," pleads with her sons, "His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid."

At a certain age, we all develop a barrel-shape, a huge head and stumpy legs and people forget that we once gave our children vigorous piggy-back rides up the stairs to bed. No one remembers that we once swam at the local pools like Olympic stars; that once, long ago we drove jalopies, made love, and tossed bales of hay onto the wagon like Atlas lifting his globe above his head.

No one pays much attention to an old man sweeping his deck in a summer afternoon. No one knows that he is still, in his mind and memory, an agile and graceful river horse wishing someone would just wave across the fence in delight and recognition.

Opinion



My life on the other side

It has been slightly more than five years since I left the editorship of *CC*. Tempus fugit! But now I can't resist the opportunity to write opposite Bert Hielema. I will write in every other issue, as Bert will from now on – in the opposite issues. My page will cover a variety of subjects, as Mr. Hielema's does, but I suspect that that is where the similarity will end. You, the reader, may be the judge.

Before I call your attention to any substantive issues, I'd like to tell you what I've been doing since the spring of 2000. This will, I think, prove to be relevant to what I write in this space in the future, because my experiences have had a substantial impact on my attitudes and life as a Christian.

I am freelancing as a writer and editor; I have written a book; I fill-in at a village library (I have a library degree); I teach school music part-time; I am the organist and choir director in an Episcopal parish. But priorities, priorities! I have a loving, witty husband, five canny felines, a new (i.e., different) house, a spiffy new bicycle, the beginnings of flower and vegetable gardens, and a newly self-installed pond which is home to the 11 fish I brought over from the other house (cats and fish alike have adjusted well).

My husband, Ed, and I moved on Easter weekend to a one-storey house in which he need not climb stairs (he has a handicap as a result of childhood polio). We now live partway between the villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, New York, a few hundred yards from the daunting river which separates us Canadians and Americans in the Niagara region. But that fast-flowing, deceptively treacherous river is edged by a serene bike path that meanders the seven miles from Youngstown to Lewiston. Thus the need for the bike; and a pleasant setting it is in which to get one's needed exercise.

About the freelancing. It will come as no great news that to be successful one needs fortitude, organizational and "customer service" skills, confidence and a good product or service to offer. I've decided that it is almost always easier to have one's name and reputation tied to an institution, agency or company (assuming the company isn't Enron-like) than it is to independently present one's self and one's services to would-be clients or contractual employers.

Nevertheless, increasing thousands of North Americans who have quit their regular jobs are proving daily it can be done, and quite happily – even if very few are making an entire living doing such work.

Then there's My Book. I capitalize the words because researching, writing, editing and re-editing the biography I have written about composer George Frideric Handel have taken up a good part of my life since the fall of 2000.

The Book is not yet published; not quite yet. An acquisitions editor and a member of the editorial committee of a major Christian publisher have read it with approval, and it is awaiting reading by a third person – the person whose decision is ultimately the one that matters, and whose main interest is music. (For obvious reasons I cannot now name the publisher.) This is an experience that teaches one patience, and, particularly, to wait on the Lord. It's not too strong to say that I felt called to write My Book (perhaps you'll see why when you read on). So I trust that it will see the light of published day, if not published there, elsewhere.

My outlook has changed since 2000 in some major ways. Overall, however, an onlooker might conclude that I've become more conservative. (Do I hear a few of you groaning loudly?) Politics didn't cause the change; researching My Book did. My constant reading in secular academic sources emphasized more starkly to me than ever just what a post-Christian age we live in, and made me see how ever-more-assiduously we need to defend the Good News of Jesus Christ, as individuals and communally.

I've written My Book for music lovers (not for scholars), and for a mostly Christian audience. But it was necessary to read as much of the English-language material about Handel as I could get my hands on, as well as a few German-language sources so that I could present my case while getting my facts straight. The experience has left me with no great respect for the part of secular academia I encountered. I've seen frequently how scholars' philosophical/religious presuppositions – let's just call it worldview – are so thoroughly secular and/or so blatantly anti-Christian that it skews their conclusions.

I could go on about this, but suffice it to say that in Handel's case – who most famously, of course, wrote Messiah – there has been attached to him by 20th and 21st century scholars (and even by the press) a certain worldly persona that comfortably fits their own modern mindset, and that is based both on a selective reading of the historical sources and on a fundamental lack of understanding of Christian faith – a lack that handicaps any attempt to understand the Baroque era in which Handel lived. I strongly suspected that the modern picture of Handel (which now also includes the assumption by many that he was homosexual) may not be the whole story, or even the true story.

It's neither. I felt it was important to point that out, not so much through argument as through drawing a readable (I hope!) sketch of his life that includes his faith, faith that bit by bit revealed itself to be real and strong. Reading accounts by Handel's contemporaries and his own few surviving letters, I myself was much moved by the generously Christian character he exhibited in dealing with those who tried repeatedly to destroy his career and his reputation, and by the straightforward, steadfast faith he exhibited in all the difficult periods of his unusual life.

Since a year ago Easter I have taught music three days a week at one of the Lewiston Catholic elementary schools (there are three). Due to a drastic drop in enrolment, that will become two days in September. The band program was axed (a course of action I recommended). But I applaud the fact that the school has not deemed either classroom music or art to be expendable in a time of financial difficulty.

Garnering support for Catholic lower education, like for Reformed Christian lower education, is becoming an increasing struggle. Catholics face many of the same issues (at least, many of the issues American Reformed people face): without government support such education is expensive, and the property taxes which support the public school system (unused by parents supporting Catholic schools) are creeping ever higher.

Increasingly, parents need to be convinced that the expense is worth it, and that Catholic education is substantively different than public education. (It is, but not so fundamentally as I have seen Reformed education to be.) And many people who grew up Catholic have to be convinced that it's worthwhile to remain an active part of their church at all. Some nominal Catholics do send their children to Catholic schools – for what appear to be moral/behavioral reasons.

Then there's the relationship between the church and the school. There's a principal, but the priest ultimately calls important shots. If the priest is the right kind of person (the classic "benign dictator"), that works, even works well. If he's not, it doesn't. I wonder if the local priest would consider listening to a talk on sphere sovereignty.

My life as a Calvinist among the Catholics has certainly been interesting. I like my colleagues and have discovered that I really do enjoy teaching. God created us with a deep capacity to love music and be moved by it, and given the slightest opportunity and encouragement, most kids eagerly reveal that.

One of my non-classroom duties is playing the piano and leading a small Chorus at the Friday morning Mass. After the first Mass I accompanied last year, the first grade teacher – an evangelical – came up to me afterwards. As I recall, two of the songs were "How Great Thou Art" and "They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love" – the latter being one of the few songs the entire school sings enthusiastically and claps along with, I later discovered. (Teaching Catholics to sing heartily at Mass is a mission task in its own right!) Mrs. Grade 1 didn't then know I'm not a Catholic.

Grinning, she said, "You play like a Protestant!" I laughed – and took it as a compliment.

But I wondered: "How do you mean?"

"Well, forcefully, energetically," she said, "like you're really 'into it.'"

I supposed it would be hard not to play those songs "like a Protestant," I said, and she agreed.

However, the Sister who runs the church education program was equally enthusiastic, which I secretly and especially relished after Mrs. Grade 1's remarks.

There are two other non-Catholic teachers; one is the middle school science teacher (another evangelical), the other is the librarian and computer teacher (an Episcopalian). We may not, of course, partake of Communion. (No one said we couldn't; I knew.)

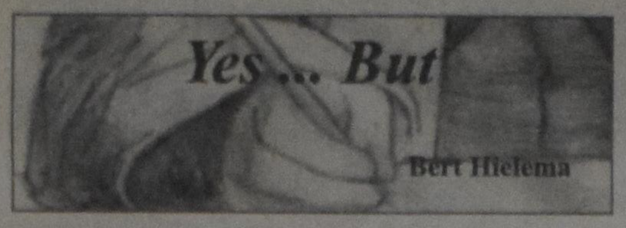
Early on, it bothered me. ("Who are they to think they have a lock on this?" I fumed to myself.) It no longer does. In Catholic terminology we non-Catholic believers are participating with them in the body of Christ spiritually, but not spiritually and physically (the "real presence"). Which, in any case, is what we Reformed folks believe we are doing at Communion.

However much we may disagree, and rightly, with elements of Catholic doctrine, we need to recognize that the Catholic Church is the major Christian church and entity in our world which still has the resources and will to try to hold the tide of relativism at bay. We are natural allies in the fight to maintain there is Truth outside ourselves, and then in preserving theological, biblical orthodoxy, some concrete expressions of which are seen in pre-natal and end-of-life issues, and approaches to genetic engineering. It's pretty obvious we're not going to get help in fighting relativism from the mainline Protestant churches, as churches.

We may thank God for a Pope who is both the astute theologian he is and a soft-spoken pastor whose humility is an integral part of his character. About the truth of that latter point, I take the word of those who know him as that humble servant of God over than the word of the press who, characterizing his orthodox apologetics as both oppressive and aggressive, have insisted that he is "God's Rottweiler."

Which reminds me of a clever and gentle-spirited cartoon I saw just after Benedict was elected: A large, paunchy man and a short, elderly woman with a bun in her hair are standing at curbside waiting for the light to turn so that they can cross the street. The man is wearing an oversized T-shirt featuring a picture of a Rottweiler, and the words: "I my Rottweiler." Over her dress, the woman is also wearing a T-shirt. Her's has a picture of Pope Benedict holding his papal (bishop's) staff. It says: I My German shepherd."

Marian Van Til worked for Christian Courier *from 1984-2000, and preceded Harry der Nederlanden as its editor. She now lives in Youngstown, NY; she may be contacted via e-mail at <mvantil@adelphia.net>.*



The self-destruction of the U.S. army

I asked a nice young man wearing a cross in Sioux Center, Iowa, when he was filling my tank, whether he expected to be drafted.

"No," he said, "but I wouldn't mind. Some of my buddies are in the army, and they like it."

I then asked him whether he would volunteer.

"Of course not," he told me, "I might get killed."

That's the dilemma the US army faces today. Young men and a few young women, especially the gas-pumper kind don't mind being in the military: steady pay, good pension, free medical care, housing, training. Free travel, too. But when the travel is to places where bullets fly and bombs explode, the physical dangers start to outweigh the other benefits.

Being a soldier is a mind-killing bore in peace time. I know, I was a conscript for 16 months, and even managed to become a drill sergeant in that short period. There I discovered that a military life moves between two extremes: wait or hurry. Mostly wait.

Today the US army is faced with something entirely new: three negatives are at work simultaneously. 1) Because the economy is booming, recruitment into the forces is down drastically. 2) By some estimates 14,000 soldiers have to be replaced because of deaths (1,700) or wounded (12,000), while tens of thousands suffer from depression. The *New England Journal of Medicine* reports that 16 percent of those who served in Iraq – now approaching one million – are afflicted with major depression, general anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder. (3) Re-enlistment is at a record low.

On June 14 U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney made a rare admission: he said that the ongoing occupation of Iraq was straining the U.S. military to the point where its readiness is being adversely affected. In other words: the mighty American army is in crisis. It no longer can continue the Iraqi misadventure.

Here's why. A booming house market has absorbed a lot of unskilled labor, from window manufacturing, to concrete mix drivers, to nail-pounding framers and roofers, all of which has contributed to the recruitment shortfall.

Blame China for providing cheap, cheap money and television for broadcasting gory battle pictures day in day out. Americans are patriotic, but losing life and limb for a dubious cause is a different matter. Now only 37 percent of Americans think that Iraq is worth the trouble.

Missed recruiting goals

Although since last fall the U.S. unemployment rate has declined only slightly, the Army has missed four straight monthly recruiting goals and is in imminent danger of missing its total of 80,000 new recruits reporting for active duty by September 30. By the end of April almost 35,000 have been signed up, leaving a shortfall of 20,000, despite a $20,000 bonus for enlisting from three to six years. To entice specialists such as computer programmers or those with medical training, they are promised full payments of all or part of their outstanding student loans. Just this week, in an even more desperate move, army recruiters will double the top cash bonus for new recruits to $40,000 and have even proposed a pilot program to provide up to $50,000 in home-mortgage help for recruits who sign up for eight years of active duty.

The Pentagon Purse must be bottomless! Stratfor supplied me with this information.

Not only has the largest army in the world difficulty attracting new recruits, it's having even greater problems retaining the soldiers it already has. In 2004, more junior officers left the army than in the previous two years. These junior officers, mostly captains who are eligible to leave the Army after their first four years of service, are the ones leading troops in combat in Iraq. The experience they have gained is invaluable to the Army. Now inexperienced officers will cause even more casualties.

Those who are in the army face long and frequent duty overseas, taxing especially those with families. Not surprisingly divorce rates, from the beginning of combat operations in Iraq in 2003 through 2004, went up 78 percent for Army officers and 53 percent for enlisted personnel. Deeply demoralizing.

Field commanders no longer may kick soldiers out for abusing alcohol or drugs, being overweight or performing unsatisfactorily, such as failing to meet physical fitness standards. To keep numbers at a maximum, they have to refer these cases to the general staff, further deteriorating the quality of the army. Rotten apples affect all, as sinking standards produce substandard soldiers and thus more fatalities.

The combination of recruiting shortfalls, the stress placed on soldiers by frequent and lengthy deployments to Iraq, and the growing physical and psychological casualty rate, have weakened the U.S. military to the point where it is becoming unable to respond quickly and effectively to other threats. Not surprisingly Iran and North Korea, both Axis of Evil members, are thumbing their nose at Uncle Sam.

Thanks to Bush and Rumsfeld the most powerful war machine the world has ever known is facing the danger of self-destruction. To reverse these trends, the United States will have no other option but to withdraw a major portion of its troops from Iraq. The longer it waits, the more serious the damage will be.

'Bare the truth'

Some time ago I transposed the initial letters of Donald Rumsfeld into Ronald Dumsfeld. Well, I have another 'Spoonerism' in mind, making Blair and Bush into Bare (as in 'bare the truth') and Blush (as in 'being ashamed'). I think this is especially appropriate after the revelation of the now famous "Downing Street Memo" of July 23, 2002 on a meeting with Prime minister Blair on that date in which the chief of British overseas intelligence gave an account about his recent trip to Washington.

The "Downing Street Memo" shows that the White House, 8 months before the actual invasion, had already decided to do so. Consider these direct quotes: "C– the head of British foreign Intelligence – reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now – July 2002 – seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.... It seemed clear that Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided. But the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbors, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran."

"Man proposes, God disposes"

Two points stand out: (1) Bush had made up his mind to invade Iraq before July 2002, and (2) links to terrorism and the existence of a program to develop weapons of mass destruction would be the justification for the invasion, even though these grounds were weak or non-existent. Why was Bush so eager to invade Iraq?

"He was thinking about invading Iraq in 1999," said author and Houston Chronicle journalist Mickey Herskowitz. "It was on his mind. He said in an interview, 'One of the keys to being seen as a great leader is to be seen as a commander-in-chief.' He continued, 'My father had all this political capital built up when he drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait and he wasted it.' And further, 'If I have a chance to invade..., if I had that much capital, I'm not going to waste it. I'm going to get everything passed that I want to get passed and I'm going to have a successful presidency.'"

This was 1999, a full year before he actually became president. There is no question now that his desire to make a name in war predated 9/11 and even his election to the presidency. That he delighted in the role as commander-in-chief was quite evident when Baghdad had fallen after a few weeks with few casualties. Then Bush's avid aspiration had been actualized and his moment of glory had arrived. We all can still picture his gloatingly glorious appearance – landing on that aircraft carrier in full battle dress where a huge sign proudly proclaimed: "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED."

It was supposed to be the crowning achievement of his presidency. Here he had earned a honorable place in the annals of history. Now he could build the political capital necessary to achieve his domestic agenda and become, in his mind, "a great president."

"Man proposes, God disposes." It didn't quite work out this way. The only positive accomplishment has been capturing a deranged and evil man – a man not unlike Zimbabwe's Mugabe. It was then and is now a bad decision because it was based on lies: the alleged presence of nuclear weapons and links to Al Qaeda.

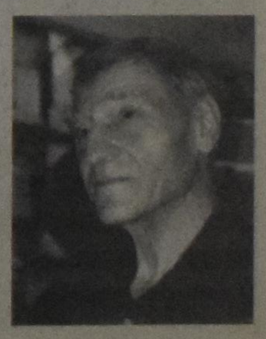
'War-president'

Why did his immediate advisors go along? Oil comes to mind. No doubt Cheney encouraged it for that purpose. Or modern warfare. No doubt Rumsfeld endorsed it so that he could prove that his concept of a small high-tech army was the wave of the future. No doubt Colin Powell went along because he was a good order-obeying soldier and naive enough to trust the president.

And all these Democrats? Why did they not object to the war? Perhaps they all wanted to teach the Muslim world – especially Saudi Arabia – a lesson in American military might. After all 9/11 was Saudi dominated and possession of Iraq's strategic location would allow the United States to pressure Iran or Syria directly. They too believed that, after a swift and decisive victory, the Islam world fear and respect Washington's fist.

Everything that could go wrong, did. Right from the start there was a big mess. There still is. Why did he do it? Based on that 1999 interview and the 2002 "Downing-Street-Memo I can only conclude that his real reason for invading Iraq was that he wanted to prove that he was as much a 'war-president' as Reagan, who successfully invaded Grenada and Paraguay and as no-nonsense as Margaret Thatcher, the Falkland hero.

From these current revelations an image emerges of a willful, unbending president – a man like Nixon – loath to say sorry and admit fault, decisive, yes, but also able to make substantial mistakes and unable to acknowledge them. My plea to both Bush and Blair, please Bare and Blush – tell the truth and say sorry – or you will continue to pay the price of the great wrongs of this war, a price already far too high and still climbing.



Previous columns and other writings can be seen at 'hielema.ca'

Arie's dream synod

In *CC* June, 13, 1958, Arie Doff wrote about his dream synod, in which he was asked by *CC* to attend Synod 1958 and to interview some of the delegates. Arie's dream was precipitated by his reading of an Agenda approximately equal in weight and girth to the one for Synod 2005, so it's fitting for us to recall the effects of that earlier agenda. The huge agenda for 2005, however, may have precipitated more nightmares than dreams.

In his dream synod, Arie encountered four delegates: Rev Van Grieven, Rev. Kruiper, Rev. Slot and Rev. Gladman.

Arie asked Rev. Van Grieven how things were going at synod.

"Badly, very badly," he answered. "Nothing is going right. I'm not reluctant to hand out good advice when I'm at synod, but it is constantly ignored. Like Daniel of old, I find myself standing alone like a prophet. No, things are not going well; we're headed in the wrong direction."

"But, Reverend, what are they doing wrong?" I asked, pencil in hand.

"I'll be very specific – everything. They're doing everything wrong. Do you hear? Everything!"

Dutifully I jotted in my notebook: "Everything."

"Which side are you on?" asked Rev. Van Grieven.

Not knowing what to say, I stammered, "Side? Me? I...I'm just on the side of the church."

"That's all? Nothing more?"

"Well, yes, I think that's all...."

"Then you're wrong too! Goodbye!"

I omit some of Arie's other trenchant observations to move quickly to his interview with Rev. Kruiper, who was hanging on every syllable uttered by a well-known seminary professor whom Arie does not identify. Kruiper was very enthusiastic about synod.

To the question what he thought of synod, Kruiper replied: "Wonderful! Great! Excellent!"

"And how are the discussions?"

"Very fine! Excellent! Outstanding!"

"You seem to be having an outstanding, er, I mean, great time at synod."

"Indeed, Mr. Arie. This is the best time of my life. And I don't find it at all tiring, because I hardly need to say a thing. The leadership is in excellent hands. Nothing can possibly go wrong. Who am I to raise objections to the proposals of professors? I have complete confidence in the leadership of more experienced and learned men like Dr. Slot and Rev. Gladman. All I do is vote."

Arie found Dr. Slot sipping on a milkshake. After he had noisily emptied his glass and began talking, he was unstoppable.

"The success of synod hinges upon the depth of the discussions, brother Doff. And the success of a synodical delegate hinges on timing – on knowing when to speak and when to be silent."

Arie says the man talked in capital letters and italics, but I won't try to replicate that here.

"Let me be frank with you, my good man," said Dr. Slot. "I have a great deal of influence here at synod. Why is that, you ask? It's because I only speak final words. The words of Dr. Slot close the discussion.

"First I listen to the discussion and remain silent. Often my younger colleagues look at me, wondering what Dr. Slot is thinking. But I remain silent and just listen. Soon I get a sense of which way the discussion is tending and how the synod will vote. My intuition is nearly infallible in this respect.

"That is my moment. Then I sum up the opinions of the majority and declare that, as I see it, although the intentions of the minority are good, their position is untenable. And last of all I point to the blessing that we may expect upon the decision we are about to take. That's the secret of my success, dear brother Duff."

Rev. Gladman was eagerly awaiting his turn to be interviewed. He was getting older but still glowed with vitality.

"And what do you think of synod this year, Rev. Gladman?"

"Like always, Arie. Just like always."

"But you're not here every year, are you?"

"Just about. I'm 59 years old. Been in the ministry 34 years, and this is my 24th synod. Over the last 10 years I've usually served as president or vice-president. In the next couple of years I hope to celebrate my silver jubilee as synodical delegate. A genuine milestone, wouldn't you say? I'm sure it will be recognized by synod."

He looked down humbly at his shoes as he said this and scuffed the grass.

"What would you say is the secret of your success and influence at synod?"

"I'll let you in on my secret, my good man. It is this: don't tip your hand. Don't take sides. During the discussions on the floor of synod, I find a good word to say on every side of the question. When it comes to voting, I only vote for one side or the other with obvious reluctance. Often I don't vote at all. That way I'm covered on all sides...."

Arie's interview was cut short by an announcement over the loudspeaker: "Because it is such beautiful weather outside, synod will convene in the open air. However, since this is a closed session, all visitors will be herded into the auditorium."

Arie's dream synod came to an end when he joined in singing along with the delegates and he was awakened by a poke from Katrien's elbow.

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he has blessed them with.

Pat & Ian Smith
Will & Diana Jorritsma
Johanna (Andrew †) Jorritsma
Shirley & Brett Hinch
Gary & Cathy Jorritsma
John & Brenda Jorritsma
20 grandchildren & 2 great-grandchildren

Home address: Shalom Manor 12 Bartlett Ave
Grimsby ON L3M 4N5

1955 2005
Franeker, Fr. The Neth. Abbotsford, BC

Genesis 2 :18

On July 29th 2005, we

GERALD AND HELEN BOSCH (nee **de Vries**)

with praise and thanksgiving to God
hope to celebrate our **50th Wedding Anniversary**
with children and grandchildren.
We invite our relatives and friends
to help us celebrate this joyful occasion.
An **Open House** will D.V. be held on July 29, 2005
from 1-3 p.m. at Living Hope CRC,
34631 Old Clayburn Rd. Abbotsford, BC
Your presence is your gift.

Home address: 2164 Webster Crt
Abbotsford BC V2T 6L7

JOHN AND CATHERINE (Pol) BYL

on July 19.
We praise God for **30 wonderful years.**
With our love and admiration,
Hannah & Ryan – Zachary, Janae
Judith & Allan,
Matt, & Charis

Home address: 94 Burrwood Dr
Hamilton ON L9C 3T2

1955 July 22 2005
Fruitland, Ont. Grimsby, Ont.

JOHN AND JOANNE KOORNNEEF (nee **Vis**)

With praise and thanksgiving to God, we share
the joy of our parents and grandparents as they
celebrate their **50th Wedding Anniversary.**

May God continue to bless you both in the years ahead.

With love from your children and grandchildren:
Paul & Jean Koornneef *Winona, ON*
Jolene, Daniel, Jestina
Ralph & Diane Koornneef *Winona, ON*
Jenna, Katy, Matthew
Bev & Al Voorberg *Grimsby, ON*
Gregory, Stacey, Nathan, Amanda
Rick & Frances Koornneef *Winona, ON*
Jeffrey, Nicole, Ryan
Wendy & Kevin Hagen *Ancaster, ON*
Kristen, Michelle, Jody, Ashley

Home address: 275 Main Street E Suite 309
Grimsby ON L3M 5N8

1955 July 22 2005

In God, whose word I praise,
in the LORD, whose word I praise. Psalm 56:10

With thanksgiving and praise to God,
we are pleased to announce
the **50th Wedding Anniversary**
of our parents and grandparents

FRED AND TRUDY DEGROOT (nee **Wagenaar**)

We pray that the LORD will continue
to bless and keep you in his care.
With love and congratulations:
Bill & Karen DeGroot, *Ft. Assiniboine, AB*
Dennis
Vic & Grace DeGroot, *Calgary, AB*
Jessica, Ben
Denise(*deceased*) & Paul Scharringa, *Norwich, ON*
Jennifer, Jeff, Yvonne, Danelle, Jonathan
Wilma & Gary McLean, *Calgary, AB*
Mike, Keaton, Katie
Dave & Michelle DeGroot, *Airdrie, AB*
Timothy, Daniel, Anthony, Evan, Nicholas, Rachel

Open House to be held on Friday, July 22, 2005
at Bethel URC, Calgary, AB, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Home address: #101 - 4944 - 8th Ave SW
Calgary AB T3C 0H4

Den Haag *July 23* *Orillia*
1955 *2005*

With thanksgiving and praise to the Lord
for his faithfulness we celebrate
the 50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY of

GERARD AND NEL RINGNALDA
(nee VERSEVELDT)

With love from your children and grandchildren
Jackie Ringnalda
Gerrit, Mariel and Nathan
Arda and Jim Rooks
Linnelle, Laura, Sarah and Elia
Helen and Ed Van Beilen
Brenden, Aaron and Marcel
Wilma and Rick Guetter
Jordan, Eric and Rachel
Arie and April Ringnalda
Kieran James

We invite you to join us for an OPEN HOUSE
on the lawn at 294 Bay Street, Orillia
on Saturday, July 16, from 2:00 to 5:00 pm

Or send greetings to Gerry and Nel at
294 Bay Street, Orillia ON L3V 3X3
email – gringnalda@sympatico.ca

BEST WISHES ONLY

Obituaries

Amsterdam Brampton
April 15, 1926 June 21, 2005

Our beloved husband, father and grandfather,

JOHANNES HERMANUS HOVINGH

went from life to life eternal.

"We will rest eternally in God's grace and love.
We will embrace His kingdom and sovereignty
ultimately and perfectly;
we will feast unceasingly in His presence."
Marva J. Dawn

Helen G. Hovingh-Zeyl, *Brampton, ON*

Dita & Dirk, *Calgary, AB*

Albert & Betty, *Clifford, ON*

Hans & Esther, *Cornwall, PEI*
Maria, Aileen, Jonathon

Ernest & Malinda, *State College, PA*
Rebecca, Jessica, Mark

Marc & Lianne, *Manitouwaning, ON*
Laura, Nathan, Sarah, Elena

Correspondence: 408-35 Kingknoll Drive
Brampton ON L6Y 5G5

Obituaries

RACHEL HANNAH KRUISSELBRINK

Suddenly, due to a tragic accident,
Rachel was taken to be with Jesus
on May 30, 2005 at the tender age of 5.

She will be deeply missed by her parents,
Dave & Kathy Kruisselbrink, her younger sister
Breanna, her grandparents, Al & Marlene Bock
and Bernie & Bea Kuisselbrink,
her great-granddparents, relatives and friends.

Home address: 54516 Range Road 203
Fort Saskatchewan AB T8L 4B6

Aalten Grimsby
April 26, 1926 June 3, 2005

Yet I am always with you:
you hold me by my right hand. Psalm 73:23

The Lord in his mercy took home his child

ANNA BOERS-KORTEN

Beloved wife of the late John Boers.
Dear sister and sister-in-law of
Hermien, *Fenwick*
Klaske, *Hoogeveen*
Gerrit, *Aalten*
Bernard & Susan, *Niagara Falls*
Albert & Nell, *Vineland*
John & Margaret, *Ridgeway*
Gerald & Nelly, *Dunnville*
Anna was predeceased by 3 brothers & sisters-in-law.
Dear Aunt to many nieces and nephews.

Corr. address: Mrs H. Korten 3436 Canboro Rd
Fenwick ON L0S 1C0

Niewveen, the Netherlands Hagersville, Ontario
February 15, 1917 June 19, 2005

NEL VAN EYK

Peacefully surrounded by her family,
at the West Haldimand General Hospital,
she went to be with the Lord on
Sunday, June 19, 2005, at the age of 88 years.

Wife of the late Len Van Eyk.
Loving Mother and Oma of
Gary & Anne of *St.Catharines,*
Michael (deceased), Paul & Leah,
Natasha & Ted,
Keith & Johanna of *Chatham,*
Nicholas, Bethany, Benjamin,
Leo & Karen of *Hagersville,*
Cherie & Jeff, and Jeanette.
and Richard of *Hagersville.*
Dear great-Oma of Kaitlyn, Madison, Meaghan,
Ashley, Jessica, Rachel, Nicole and Colin.

Mom, (Oma) was a woman of great faith
and we are comforted in the fact that
she is now in the presence of the Lord.

I lift up my eyes to the hills –
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord
the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1,2

Correspondence address: Gary Van Eyk
20 Royal York Rd, St.Catharines ON L2N 2N6

June 14, 1943 June 17, 2005
Enkhuizen, The Netherlands Clinton, Ontario

ANNE BOSMA (nee **HARLAAR**)
went home to be with her Lord.

Beloved wife of Siep
and cherished mother of
Janet, *Ancaster, Ontario* and
Clarence, *Blyth, Ontario.*

Psalm 23: *The Lord is my shepherd …*
I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Anne will be dearly missed by her family and friends.
We love you and will always remember you as a
caring and loving wife and mother.

Correspondence: Siep Bosma, Box 461
Blyth ON N0M 1H0

Job Opportunities

BOND INVESTMENTS

ELIM Village

Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Operated by the Elim Housing Society, a non-profit organization, Elim Village is a unique Christian Retirement Community. When fully developed it will be home to some 700 seniors and will offer a wide variety of housing and care options. More than 125 Independent Living apartments and duplexes are now completed. Construction is currently underway on 109 Independent Plus Living apartments with a completion date of July 2005.

PLEASE NOTE: The interest earned will fluctuate during the five-year term as the Royal Bank prime rate fluctuates and could pay up to 7% p.a.

This is not to be construed as an offer to solicit investments and no investment can be made until the investor has received an Information Statement issued by Elim Housing Society.

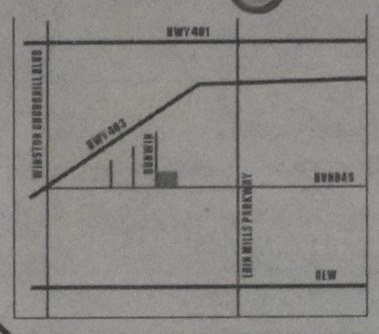
Investments can be made within an RRSP or RIF shorter term investments are also available.

We presently offer Royal Bank prime plus one percent

for instance, on June 21st, 2005, Elim was accruing interest at **5.25% p.a.**

Call Jake & Jenny DeWeerd 604 583~3546
Presentation Centre: 9089 - 160th Ave. Surrey, British Columbia

A Christian Retirement Community



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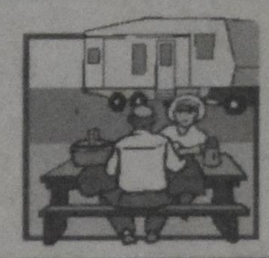

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Roel & Riet Bakema Phone: 705-645-2738
Little Europe Resort
RR 3, Bracebridge ON P1L 1X1

No pets please

For Sale

Ruby model in Phase 2 of **WELLINGSTONE CHRISTIAN HOMES** in Hamilton.
Please call **(905) 389-1679** after 6 p.m. for information.

The Ruby has 894 square feet of space consisting of kitchen, living room, master bedroom with a walk-in closet and a second bedroom with a smaller closet. The Ruby also has a balcony/patio and a storage area.

For Rent

Home with 3 bedrooms – large lot, near bus routes.
Richmond Hill area.
Phone **905-881-4317**

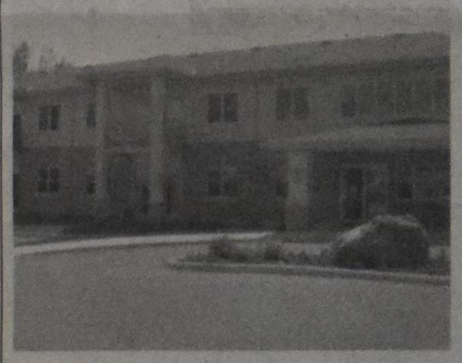
2 bedrooms, large walkout basement **apartment** near **Waterdown.** 4 appliances, non-smoker/pets. Available July 1. $750 utilities incl. Call: **905-690-3231**, cell: **905-977-8595**.

Guelph – Middle class raised bungalow with in-law suite on quiet cresent in West end of Guelph $1400 **519-338-3920**

Guelph - Student accomodation
2 blocks from the University.
For more information, phone: **1-519-767-1933.**

FRISIAN SERVICE
July 10, 2005 3:00 p.m.
in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church
Rev. John Hellinga preaching.

QUINTE CHRISTIAN RETIREMENT HOMES



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For *information - Nico and Alice Jukema. PH: 519-485-2101, email:* guestsuite@lilbitcountry.ca *web:*www.lilbitcountry.ca

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Cochrane ON P0L 1C0
Ph: 705-272-6169 or email to
cmstruyk@puc.net

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Weekly/Monthly/Seasonal
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Job Opportunities

See page 21 for more postions available
Jobs are also listed on our website:
www.christiancourier.ca

The Back to God Hour
Announces the search for the following positions:

DIRECTOR OF THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE MINISTRY LEADER

Suggestions of potential candidates and applications for either position should be submitted to

Back to God Hour Search Committee
Attn: Rev. Allen Petroelje, Chairman
203 Decker
Fremont MI 49412
alpetroelje@sbcglobal.net

Electronic filing is encouraged. Information regarding the positions can be obtained at www.btgh.org or www.crcna.org. Candidates are urged to submit applications by August 31, 2005. The committee will begin considering applications at that time. The search will continue until the positions are filled.

In keeping with the CRC Equal Opportunity Policy, persons who are members of a minority group or ethnic community are encouraged to apply.

Job Opportunities/Advertising

Available for Call

The council of Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta wishes to announce that after a year of sabbatical studies,

Rev. Kirk MacNeil

is available for call.

Pastor Kirk can be reached at
13011 - 39th Street
Edmonton AB T5A 5A3
by email at
rational@telusplanet.net
or janetandkirk@msn.com
or by phone at (780) 456-5362

The youth of **SPRINGDALE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**
need a **youth pastor/director.**

Springdale CRC is a congregation committed to the Reformed faith, located 10 minutes west of Newmarket, Ontario. The successful candidate will possess abilities to provide leadership to the church's ministry program for teens and young adults, and will show a strong desire to build relational ministries within the youth.

Interested applicants are asked to call John Olthof of the Search Committee at **905-939-870** or email:
the_search_committee@hotmail.com
or **fax # 905-939-9385**

FIRST HAMILTON CRC

in downtown Hamilton has openings for three part-time staffing positions.

(1) **Pastor of Visitation**: The primary focus will be to the elderly and shut-ins of our congregation. Availability to conduct visitations during the day is preferred. This position is ideally suited for a retired ordained pastor.

(2) **Visiting Preacher:** An ordained pastor is required to preach 18-24 times per year. Preference will be given to those who embrace the Reformed tradition and who are committed to the missional understanding of the church.

(3) **Worship Coordinator:** This position involves planning & coordinating of our worship services. Knowledge of the Reformed theological tradition and familiarity with various music genres is required.

Each of these positions is for 1-2 years. Interested applicants should contact the church office at **(905) 528-3826** or e-mail at **office@firsthamilton.ca** for a complete job description or further information.

JUBILEE
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50 YEARS

Dordt College
Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

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Administration, program planning, and supervision, as well as teaching

August 2006

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Teach in generalist BSW program with a focus on social welfare policy, child and family welfare, and research

Youth Ministry and Biblical Studies
Teach general education courses in biblical theology, a section of the first-term seminar, and courses related to the youth ministry emphasis

To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

HAMILTON DISTRICT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

invites applicants for the position of a part-time

Director of Advancement

This position may be filled on a contract basis.

The Director of Advancement will be responsible for fundraising and promotion. This role will include the development, management, and implementation of activities such as the annual capital drive, donor relations, the private loan portfolio, and creative ongoing fundraising. Applicants should be passionate about the promotion of Christian education, have excellent communication and public relations skills, and be acquainted with deferred giving programs.

For more information please call George Van Kampen (Principal) at **905-648-6655**. Letter of application and resume should be emailed to **gvankampen@hdch.org** *Application Deadline: August 1, 2005*

STOUFFVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

is inviting applications for a
teaching position for the **Grade 7&8 class.**
Consider joining this small but passionate school that seeks to offer Christ-centered education.
Contact Jake Vriend @ **scsjake@bellnet.ca**
or call **905 640 3297**

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phone: 905-774-8044 x263 or
mail: 756 Diltz Road, Dunnville Ontario N1A 2W2

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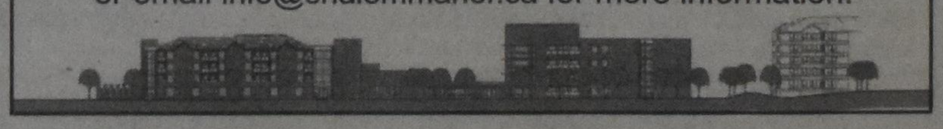
For more information please contact Henry Eygenraam at:
1 800 267 8890 or by email: henrye@csservices.ca

SHALOM MANOR Requires a

Medical Director

Shalom Manor (Grimsby, Ontario) is a 144 bed Reformed Christian Dutch ethnic non-profit long-term care home requiring a Medical Director as of September 1, 2005. We are a new Class "A" facility with all Ministry of Health policies including restraint-free and minimal lift policies in effect. Excellent opportunities. Interested physicians please contact:

Shalom Manor at 905-945-9631, extension 1151,
or email info@shalommanor.ca for more information.



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777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
905-648-2131 ext. 4205 (Ben) stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

Classified Rates

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.

RATES: All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (P.I.) (2 " wide)
rose@christiancourier.ca
Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: $18.20 P.I.
ads@christiancourier.ca

PHOTOS: There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photo-graph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.

PERSONAL ADS: *Christian Courier* would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $16 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS: We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *CC* and to parents who announce a child's birth in our paper. If you want to take advantage of this offer, please let us know when placing your ad.

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St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7
fax: 905-682-8313 e-mail: see above

OTHER INFORMATION: *CC* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style. Please provide us with clear copy. *CC* is not responsible for any errors due to hand-written or phoned-in advertisements.

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 9 The 10th Annual International Music Festival, Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in **Grimsby**, 8 p.m. Massed Choir Concert featuring 8 international choirs under the directions of the highly acclaimed Stephen Hatfield. Tickets are $10.00 per person.

July 8-10 Charlottetown Christian Ref. Church will be celebrating 50 years of ministry. For information, contact the church office at **902-894-4721** or email: chtowncrc@pei.aibn.com.

July 10 Frisian Service will be held in the **Ancaste**r Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. John Hellinga will be preaching.

July 23 Wieringermeerdag, 10 a.m. at Queens Park Drive, **Stratford**. Potluck lunch. Phone 1-519-631-6234 for more information.

July 31 Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. J. Kuntz will be preaching.

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Wieringermeerdag

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Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations" – Psalm 90:1

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Rosanne van der Woerd
3260 New St. Unit 109
Burlington ON L7N 3L4
905-639-9054

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http://home.worldchat.com/~hordyk/MaranathaHomes.html

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Sun. 19:00hrs (Zingend Geloven)
19:30 (Holland Calling)
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Billy Graham's last crusade?

Billy Graham in the 1960's

A crowd of some 90,000 people thronged to Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens June 26 on a hot, humid day for the last day of what was touted as Billy Graham's last crusade. An estimated 230,000 people heard the 86-year-old evangelist over the three-day crusade, with nearly 2,800 responding at each meeting to Graham's invitation to come forward and make a commitment to Christ.

More than 1,400 churches representing 82 denominations participated in the year-long preparations, mobilizing nearly 20,000 volunteers from their congregations.

He mounted the podium with the help of a walker. Looking frail and suffering from a number of ailments, including Parkinson's disease and prostate cancer, Graham spoke in a clear, if halting, voice.

"I was asked in an interview if this is our last crusade, and it probably is – in New York," Graham told the crowd gathered for the final meeting. "But I also said, 'Never say never.'

"This is not the end," he added, for he has an invitation to visit the United Kingdom.

"Flushing Meadows is surrounded by neighborhoods representing people from more than 130 different language groups within walking distance of Corona Park. In order to reach the multicultural mosaic of faces in the crowds representing a cross-section of the multi-ethnic communities of the city, Mr. Graham's messages were interpreted into a total of 20 different languages – as many as 13 each night," said A. Larry Ross, Mr. Graham's press representative.

An 8-foot high stage was erected in the park and 70,000 chairs set out. Three huge jumbotron screens beamed Graham's image to overflow areas.

Bill and Hillary Clinton made a surprise appearance, not equally appreciated by all. "What an honor it is to be here as a person of faith with a man I love and whom I have followed," said Bill Clinton. "He is about the only person I know who has never failed to live his faith."

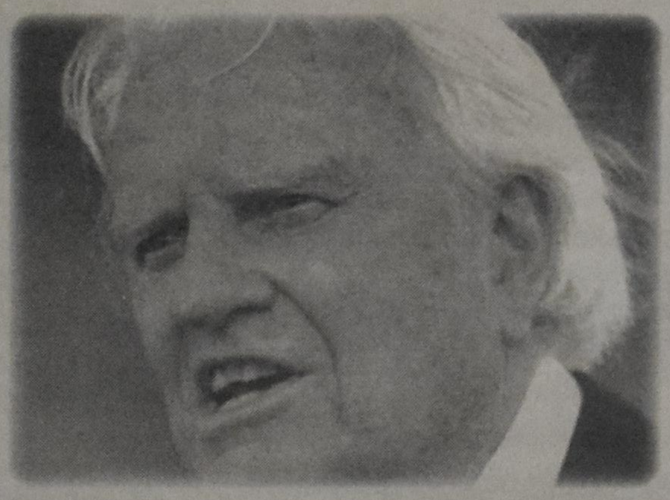
Clinton also spoke of the first Billy Graham crusade he attended as a child during the Civil Rights era. The local organizers wanted to have a segregated audience, but recalled Clinton, Graham replied, "Jesus doesn't want me to speak to a segregated audience; I'm not coming unless everyone can come to my crusade." Clinton said, "I was just a little boy and I never forgot it."

"Billy Graham, for evangelicals, put us on the national stage in a light that reflected well on us, maybe for the first time in a long time," says Larry Lyon, professor of sociology and dean of the Graduate School at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

"Here is a man who wasn't damning everyone and everything to hell unless they were exactly like him," says Dr. Lyon. "Here was a man preaching peace and love in a nonthreatening manner that really spoke to a much broader audience."

In many ways, Graham's simple message of peace and reconciliation, rather than the more contentious approach of other fundamentalist evangelicals, helped revive the evangelical optimism that had shaped a broad American self-understanding since the time of the Puritans.

In nearly sixty years of ministry, Graham has preached the Gospel to over 200 million people by some estimates.



He persuaded repressive regimes in China, Hungary, and the Soviet Union to allow giant gatherings for his crusades – events normally never allowed.

[With stories from Assist News Service, the Christian Science Monitor, ENI, and the New York Times.]

This photo was taken on the first day of the ***Seatosea cross-country trek*** *by Peter VanderBeek. He estimated that the average age of the riders is about 40. If you examine the picture closely, you'll see Peter Schuurman hiding behind, or perhaps admiring, the girl in the photo without cycling regalia.*

News Digest

Morgantaler honored

"Happy children don't grow up to build concentration camps, Dr. Henry Morgentaler told a University of Western Ontario convocation yesterday, as he argued that abortion has helped radically reduce hate and violent crime in Canada."

Morgantaler almost seems to suggest that, had abortions been readily available in Germany, there would have been no Nazi death camps.

You know you're hearing the voice of an ideologue when you hear words like that. Such certainty that those aborted children, had they lived, would have produced a high proportion of criminals. Did he check the statistics: were the rates of juvenile delinquency and criminality higher before abortion became a form of birth control?

And why stop here? Along with basic skills tests in elementary school, why not introduce criminal tendency tests in the third grade? We could gas all those who fail.

The fact that Western University chose to honor someone who devoted his life to making it easier to kill babies rather than someone who labored to keep them alive also suggests we're in the presence of an ideology.

More and more left-wing intellectuals are embracing the notion that hatred and crimes of hatred are spawned by fundamentalist religion. As a way to further reduced hatred and crime, why not abort all the children of fundamentalists?

The ethanol alternative

The Ontario government will spend $520 million over 12 years to build more ethanol plants in the province, said Premier Dalton McGuinty. Ethanol is touted as a cleaner fuel made from crops. It's supposed to help cut emissions from conventional fuel.

Instead of growing food for human beings, farmers will be growing fuel for them to burn – obviously a great way to reduce emissions.

An aspirin a day?

Should you or shouldn't you take an aspirin a day after age 50? Don't ask me, don't ask your doctor, don't ask the experts. Today's wisdom is tomorrow's myth. Experts writing in the British Medical Journal give opposing advice. Some argue that the risk of bleeding ulcers from aspirin is worse than the beneficial effects for preventing heart attacks.

I've compromised. Now I take an aspirin every other day.

I've also compromised on doing exercise to lose weight. Recent reports suggest those with extra weight live longer, healthier lives. Now I exercise every other day.

Lake damage

The damage done to lakes by phosphorous-rich fertilizers used by farmers may last for many decades. Excess phosphorus in lake water stimulates the growth of algae to the point that it chokes off the oxygen supplies for other living things, including fish. This process, known as eutrophication, can continue for years. In fact, a model created by Stephen R. Carpenter of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, suggests that it could continue for hundreds of years, even after the source of pollution has been cleaned up.

Carpenter warns that there are huge amounts of phosphorus in the watershed that hasn't washed into the lakes yet, so steps should be taken in soil management and reducing rates of erosion to prevent eutrophication.